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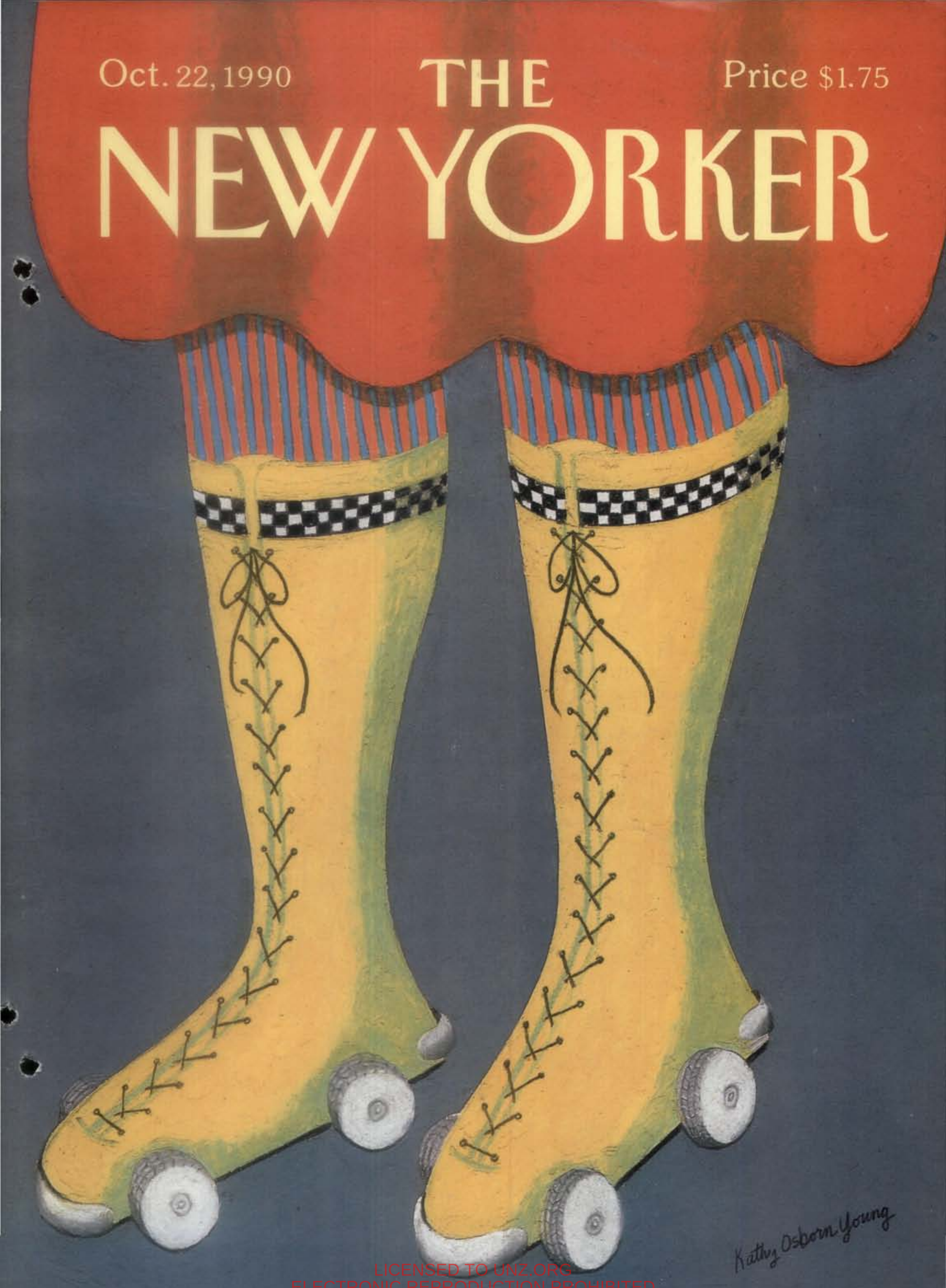
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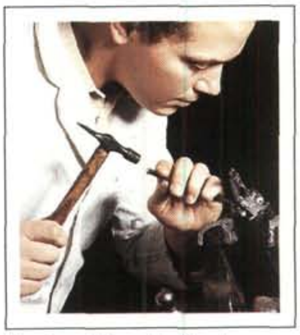

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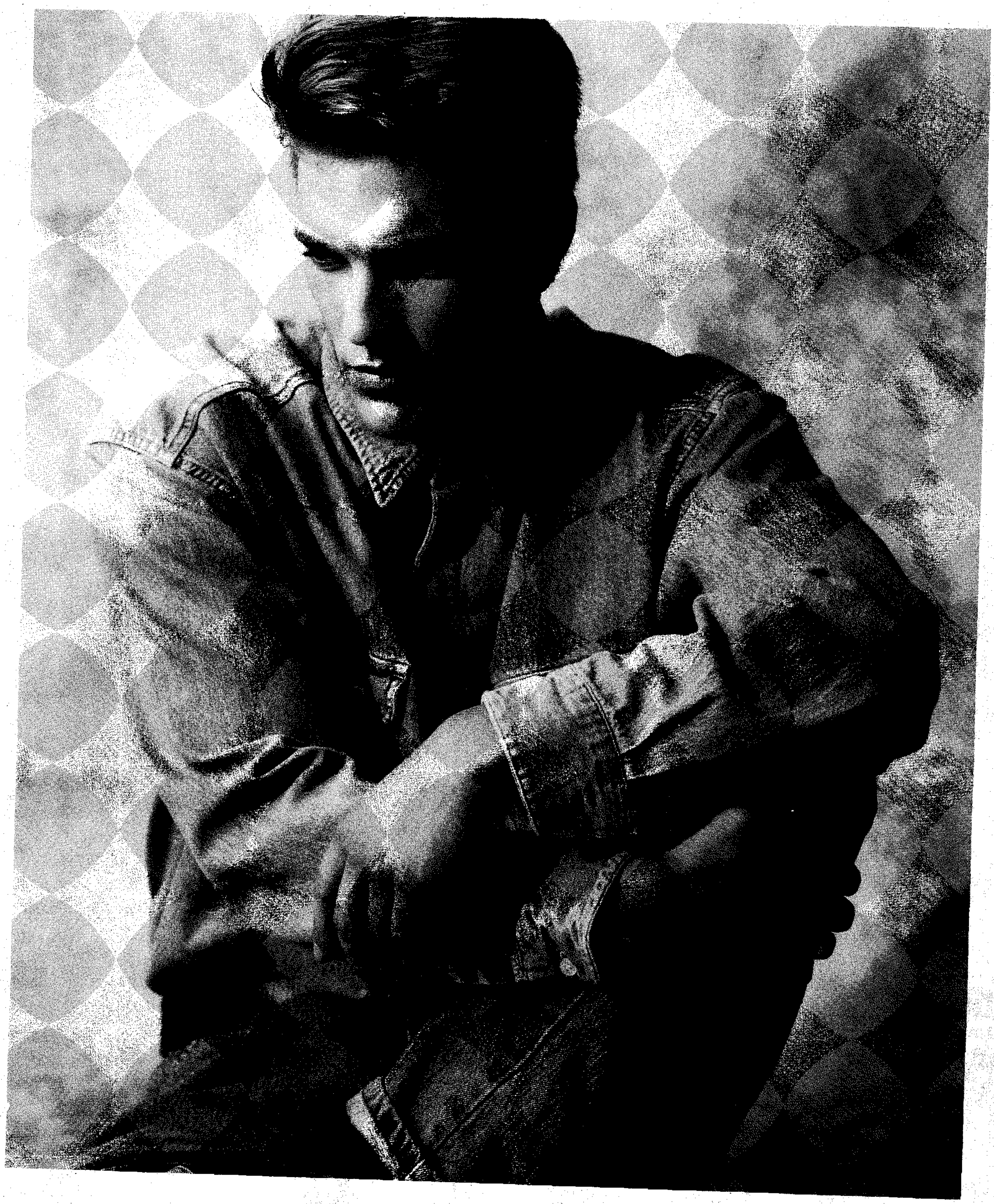

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and general manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, vice-president and advertising director; Matthew D. Roberts, vice-president and marketing director; Pamela H. Older, vice-president and director of manufacturing. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Carol Orr & Co., Publishers Representative: 3300 Oak Lawn, Suite 500, Dallas, Tx. 75219. Vol. LXVI, No. 36, October 22, 1990. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1990 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $32.00; two years, $52.00. In Canada, one year, $50.00. Other foreign, one year, $56.00, payable in advance.
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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE THEATRE

WE'LL come straight to the point. Allhallows Eve is upon us, and a number of local theatres have, accordingly, arranged seasonal entertainments. For instance: "Horrorscope (A Zodiac Murder Mystery)," a piece written and directed by Bob Jahn, is being presented at Playlab (17 East 31st Street). This for the intrepid.

For the avant-garde *and* the intrepid, Holly Hughes, Blue Man Group, Doug Skinner, and Alien Comic/Tom Murrin will all be performing in "The Alien Comic's Halloween Frights and Delights" at La Mama, on October 29 at 8. According to the press release, "Blue Man Group features Chris Wink, Matt Goldman, and Phil Stanton as three blue, bald, human figures who enact magical, disarming rituals involving a colorful ooze of constructions that surprise and shock the audience with innovative visual and conceptual devices." The release goes on to state that this show will preview parts of a "site-specific full-length production" to be produced at La Mama in January. This, to be sure, is puzzling. It's easy to see how the term "site-specific" would apply to something like En Garde Arts' "Crowbar," a play *about* the old Victory Theatre that was being *produced* at the old Victory Theatre, or even the same group's "Father Was a Peculiar Man"—which was produced in the meat-packing district and, if nothing else, featured a young woman singing "Someone to Watch Over Me" while hanging from a meat hook. But how can Blue Man Group's work in progress be site-specific if it is being performed at La Mama? Clearly, we haven't yet grasped the concept here.

Meanwhile, for those who do lust after site-specificity, Hasselfree Mysteries, a five-year-old producing organization, offers an environmental mystery play ("Crime of Your Life") on Amtrak's New York–Atlantic City route, October 28, November 11, and December 9. Trains depart Pennsylvania Station at 10 A.M. and return by 10 P.M. (Breakfast is included.) Call 563-5572 for information.

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

**ABUNDANCE**—Beth Henley's latest work, which is set in nineteenth-century Wyoming. Tess Harper, Amanda Plummer, Lanny Flaherty, Keith Reddin, and Michael Rooker make up the cast. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

**CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY**—The first production of the season is **THE COLORADO CATECHISM**, a play by Vincent J. Cardinal. With Becky Ann Baker and Kevin James O'Connor. Previews through Oct. 20. Opens Oct. 21 at 7:30. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

**GONZA THE LANCER**—A play by the eighteenth-century author Chikamatsu Monzaemon. Previews through Oct. 21. Opens Oct. 23 at 6:45. With Mary Schultz. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

**JACKIE MASON: BRAND NEW**—The comedian brings his act to Broadway again. Preview on Oct. 16. Opens Oct. 17 at 8. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

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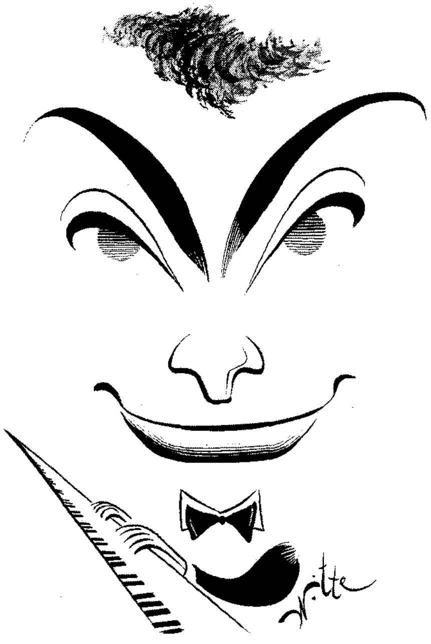
**KING LEAR**—Hal Holbrook has the title role in this production of Shakespeare's tragedy, which was directed by Gerald Freedman. Previews begin Oct. 19. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

**MACHINAL**—A revival of Sophie Treadwell's 1928 play. Directed by Michael Greif. With John Seitz, Marge Redmond, and Jodie Markell. Opens Oct. 15 at 7:15. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)



*Michael Feinstein*

**OH, KAY!**—David Merrick's new production of the Gershwins' 1926 musical comedy. The setting has been moved from Long Island to Harlem, and James Racheff has written a new book, based on the original by Guy Bolton and P. G. Wodehouse. Angela Teek and Brian Mitchell lead the large cast; Dan Siretta directed. In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." Seen last spring at Playwrights Horizons, the show has moved to Broadway. Previews through Oct. 17. Opens Oct. 18 at 6:45. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**THE SUM OF US**—Tony Goldwyn and Richard Venture star in this play by David Stevens. Directed by Kevin Dowling. Preview on Oct. 15. Opens Oct. 16 at 6:45. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

### RECENTLY OPENED

**ABOUT TIME** and **HANDY DANDY**—James Whitmore and Audra Lindley in two plays in repertory. The first is by Tom Cole and the second is by William Gibson. ("About Time" is reviewed in this issue.) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

**ASPECTS OF LOVE**—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**BIG, FAT AND UGLY WITH A MOUSTACHE**—A play by Christopher Widney, with Evan O'Meara, David Beach, Alison Martin, and Brian Howe. The director was Stone Widney. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 869-3530.)

**BY AND FOR HAVEL**—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**AUDIENCE**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**CATASTROPHE**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes Oct. 28.)

**CALVIN TRILLIN'S WORDS, NO MUSIC**—The writer and humorist's new one-man show. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes Oct. 28.)

**CAMILLE, A TEARJERKER**—Everett Quinton a[illegible] Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

**FALSETTOLAND**—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a bar mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

**FOREVER PLAID**—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

**HAPPY DAYS**—Charlotte Rae and Bill Moor in a revival of Beckett's play. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

**IT'S STILL MY TURN**—Terry Sweeney portrays Nancy Reagan in this one-man show. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

**JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY**—Presenting two plays in rotating repertory: Shaw's **MISALLIANCE** and Cocteau's **INFERNAL MACHINE.** (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

**LETTICE & LOVAGE**—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Shaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

**THE MENSCH**—A comedy by Steven Kronovet, presented by Manhattan Punch Line. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 21.)

**MICHAEL FEINSTEIN IN CONCERT: PIANO AND VOICE**—Mr. Feinstein in a limited engagement that runs through Oct. 27. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**THE MISER**—Philip Bosco, Carole Shelley, and Mia Dillon have the leads in Molière's comedy. Directed by Stephen Porter. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 23[illegible]6200.)

**THE PIANO LESSON**—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

**PRELUDE TO A KISS**—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Bar-

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nard Hughes is the old man, Susan Gabriel is the bride, and John Dossett is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

**The Rothschilds**—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book), with a sixteen-member cast led by Mike Burstyn. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

**Six Degrees of Separation**—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play, other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright and the director, Jerry Zaks. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. What more do you want? With Swoosie Kurtz and Courtney B. Vance. (6/25/90) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Smoke on the Mountain**—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

**Stand-Up Tragedy**—Marcus Chong and Jack Coleman in a play by Bill Cain. (Criterion Center Stage Right, Broadway at 45th St. 239-6200. Closes Oct. 16.)

**Tartuffe**—Molière's comedy, presented by the Willow Cabin Theatre Company. (TaDa! Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 886-1889.)

**Theme and Variations**—A play by Samuil Alyoshin, translated from the Russian by Michael Glenny. With Kathleen McCall, Ethan Phillips, and William Wise. (Chelsea Stage, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810.)

### LONG RUNS

**BLACK AND BLUE:** An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while La Vern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **CITY OF ANGELS:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A FEW GOOD MEN:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series. Directed by Don Scardino. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **GYPSY:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). With Linda Lavin. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

## DANCE

WITH so much dancing from Asia booked into New York this season, it seemed a good moment to revisit Walter Lang's 1956 film of "The King and I," which was screened at the Biograph recently as part of a series called "A New Look at Hollywood Musicals." This picture instructed a generation on such matters as where Siam (now Thailand) lies on a map, what it means to be enlightened in the modern world (free the slaves, use silk napkins), what a man who intends to shave his scalp should have (a round head), and what measures a woman should take to retain her independence (learn to whistle, get some teaching experience under her belt). Choreographed by Jerome Robbins, the musical also gave a few indelible lessons in how dance styles change according to demographic shifts. We learn this from both European and Asian perspectives. The most elaborate dance—a self-contained work called "Small House of Uncle Thomas"—retells the story of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, with echoes of the Biblical Exodus. In the movie, the ballet is written by a highly educated Burmese slave, who has responded to the novel from personal experience. The story sets us up to believe that the brilliance of the dance is a result not only of her multicultural experience in the theatre (presumably she would know Burmese court dancing, too) but also of her complex motivations and ironic viewpoint. All this is emphasized through a movement idiom that compresses Thai classical, Graham (Eliza is danced by Yuriko), ballet, mime, and something that one can only call Broadwayese. From such a melting-pot patois, Robbins managed to suggest an integrity of style in the art and a depth of character in the author.

As coldly finished as the "Small House" ballet looks on film, one could still argue that the movie's key dance moment comes earlier, in "Getting to Know You." In this European-flavored number, the governess teaches her new charges how to shake hands, and that turns into a kind of quadrille. At the climax, the governess promenades on the spot, her hyperbolically wide hoopskirt tracing her motion in a lustrous tide. A member of the King's retinue, imitating the governess, notices the skirt, loves it, and has an idea. She beckons to four little children, who, hunching over, surround her at the waist and become *her* hoopskirt. For a few seconds, the jewelled realism of Asian dance theatre and the kinetic fantasies of European ballet have traded places—as if people with dauntingly opposed viewpoints are getting to know, and are being touched by, each other on a very deep level. To our surprise, a lot of the Biograph audience wept at this point; whether they did so because the number represented hopes harbored or hopes abandoned we cannot say.

**Molissa Fenley**—Presenting a week-long program of solo dances: "The Floor Dances (Requiem for the Living)," "State of Darkness," and the New York première of "Bardo." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 16-20 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 2 and 7:30.)

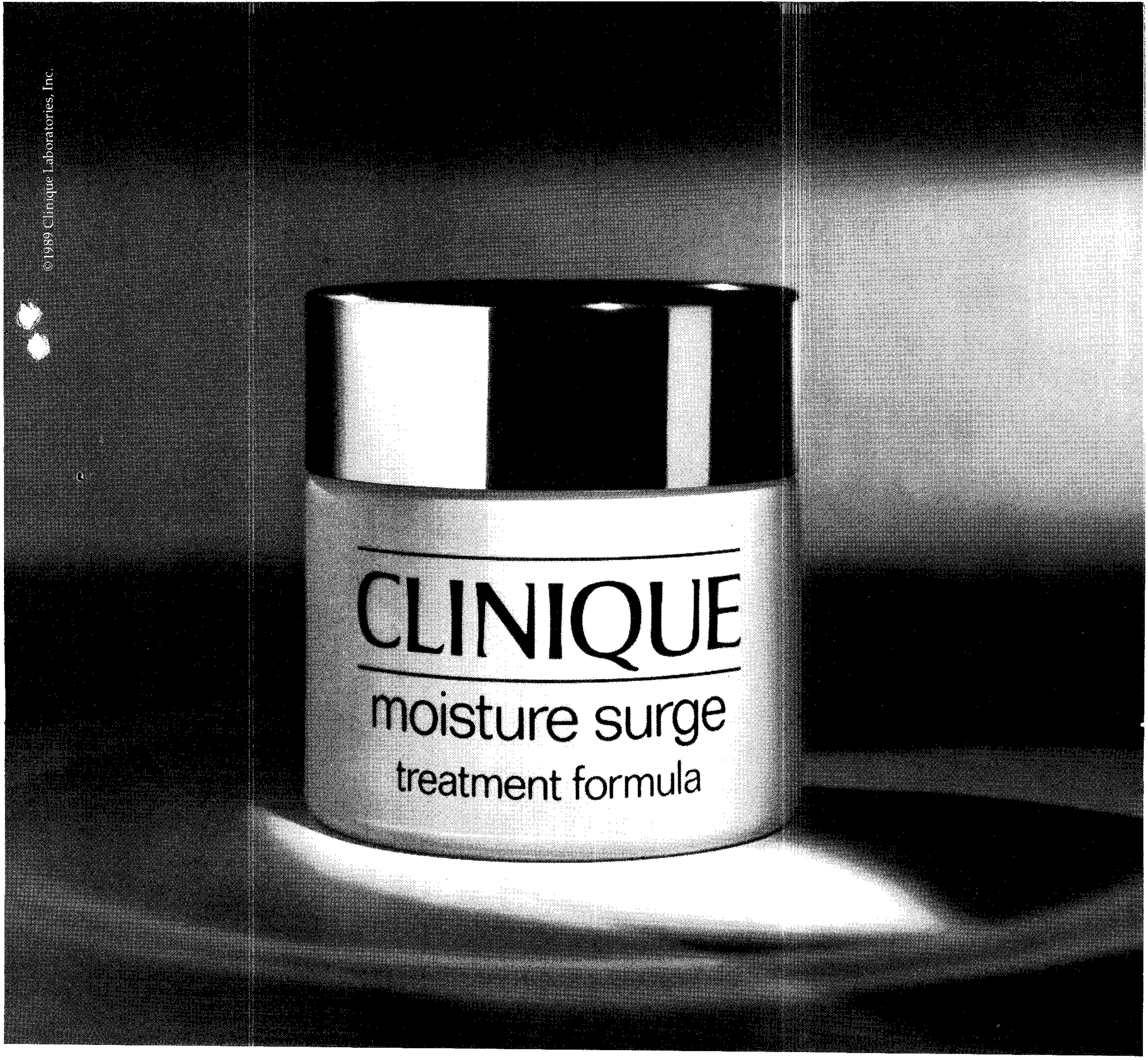
**Pearl Lang Dance Theatre**—In new and repertory works. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Oct. 18-20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 719-2733.)

**Georgian State Dance Company**—A seventy-five-member folk-dance troupe in the first performances of a two-week engagement. Through Nov. 4. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Oct. 23 at 8 and Oct. 24 at 2 and 8.)

**Jennifer Muller/The Works**—Opening performances of a one-week engagement. Oct. 23 at 8: "Lovers," "Alone Together," and the premières of "Refracted Light" and "Righteous About Passing (on the Left)." . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 8: "Righteous About Passing (on the Left)," "The Enigma," "The Gift," and "Couches." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

### STRATA

*In a small plaza hemmed in by Franklin, Leonard, Centre, and Lafayette Streets, around the corner from the Men's House of Detention, a tiny Stonehenge has risen: forty cement blocks in a circle, each about the size and shape of a typewriter. Artist Alan Michelson set them there in late September as a tribute to the Collect, a lake that stretched from Franklin to Duane Streets until the city drained it around 1810, because the refuse-spewing tanneries along its shores had turned it into a health hazard. Michelson's blocks reflect a multitude of human and natural activities that have taken place on the site. Molded on their surfaces are bas-relief tin cans and cardboard flaps that evoke the modern-day homeless, antique ice skates and anchors that recall the Colonial era, and, representing a more pastoral time, reeds, elm bark, and cattails, as well as reminders of deer, ducks, turtles, raccoons, and muskrats. The piece, entitled "Earth's Eye," will remain on view until Christmas, and its goal, Michelson says, is "to remind people that there's more than pipes and pavement under our feet. We always forget: there's history* down there.*"*



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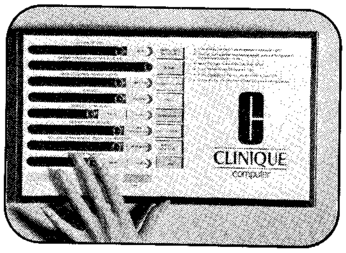

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# NIGHT LIFE

THE Two-Drink Minimum: Variations on a Theme.

Sweet Basil; Tuesday, 10:15-10:20: At our suggestion, waitress recites available beers. We hesitate for a moment, consulting with our companions re relevant boycotts. We choose a beer. Our beer arrives. We drink it. 11:00: Ditto.

Ballroom; Wednesday, 8:55: We order a club soda with lime. Waiter asks if our second drink will also be a club soda. We say we don't know—we're moody. Waiter explains that orders can't be placed during the show. We say O.K. For our second drink, we order a club soda with lemon. 9:30: Midway through our first club soda—we've been lingering, we admit—our second makes a sudden appearance. We pretend someone has sent the drink over, and we turn around and mouth "thank you" to no one in particular.

Michael's Pub; Thursday, 9:00: Waiter *explains that* we can't order during the show, and that he can't *deliver* during the show. We sense a no-win situation. We order two drinks—a beer and a club soda. Our three companions do the same. Someone requests a round of waters. 9:15: There are now twelve glasses on our table. The table is roughly the size of a chess board. We spend the show taking part in an impromptu taste test.

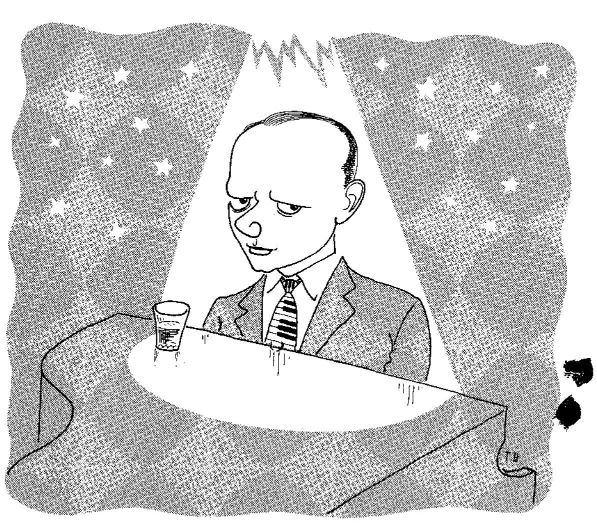
Village Vanguard; Friday, 9:50: Waitress says she can take *and* deliver orders during the show. We give her our nondenominational blessing. Waitress adds, however, that she can't take cash during the performance and tells us, in no uncertain terms, to ante up. We quickly estimate how much we're likely to spend on the drinks we're likely to order. Waitress says we may be candidates for a rebate later in the night.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL,** 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—San Francisco-bred singer **MARY CLEERE HARAN,** whose shows involve some Gershwin, some Irving Berlin, and a pleasant dose of patter, is at work in the Oak Room through Oct. 20. **ANDREA MARCOVICCI** starts work on Oct. 23. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

**BALLROOM,** 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A tony cabaret attained by passing through an opulent tapas restaurant, where wicker baskets overflow with fruit and vegetables and a row of Serrano hams hangs over the bar; if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **BETTY,** a three-woman singing group that has its own T-shirts and that offers a kind of wicked, amphetamine-paced postmodern cabaret, continues through Oct. 20, and is supplanted by **EARTHA KITT** beginning Oct. 21. Ms. Kitt is joined by Phyllis Pastore on Oct. 22.

**BLUE NOTE,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour (there's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak). It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. The fierce, impassioned singer **GIL SCOTT HERON**—who once warned that "the revolution will not be televised"—is on hand Oct. 16-21. Elba Ramalho begins a week-long residency on Oct. 23. First set at nine. Dining.



*Joe Jackson at the Bottom Line and the Marquee*

**BOTTOM LINE,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. You remember **WENDY & LISA.** *In the movie* "Purple Rain," they moped around a lot because Prince wouldn't even *listen* to their song. In real life, the duo played, respectively, guitars and keyboards for the Revolution. They were the only members of Prince's harem who didn't writhe around in lingerie and who really seemed to have a stake in the music. Their own albums, which are slick and funny and spill over with funk, jazz, and pop, haven't done so well, but they're worth a listen and a dance or two. The group will be here on Oct. 16. **JOE JACKSON** tries out some new material on Oct. 20. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

**BRADLEY'S,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. The **FREDDY COLE** *trio will be singing and swinging here through Oct. 20; pianist* **BENNY GREEN,** bassist **RAY DRUMMOND,** and drummer **CARL ALLEN** come in on Oct. 21; and saxophonist **GARY BARTZ,** pianist **GEORGE CABLES,** and bassist **RAY DRUMMOND** start up on Oct. 22. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

**CARLYLE HOTEL,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, three walls of Vertès murals, and **MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH,** a light, cool, breezily swinging trio that was formed in Houston in 1983. Their tunes are mostly American-songdom standards, but the group *breathes new life into them with surprising* arrangements and inventive, difficult harmonies. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans' Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

**CAT CLUB,** 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—Every Sunday night, this club, usually dominated by metalheads, is ceded to a gang of Lindy Hop enthusiasts called the New York Swing Dance Society. An older couple glides across the floor at an easy pace; an eager young man, his tie loosened, his face perspiring, throws his date around like a crazed cossack. A swing collective run by **STAN RUBIN** holds sway Oct. 21. Music from eight to midnight.

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffitied walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene—Blondie, Talking Heads, the Ramones, and Television were regular attractions. Other clubs of the era have fizzled, but CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

**CONDON'S,** 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—A snug, candlelit catacomb just east of Union Square. Pianist **AHMAD JAMAL** leads a trio Oct. 16-21; Rashied Ali brings a quintet in for a week-long gig beginning on Oct. 23. Music after ten.

**CONTINENTAL DIVIDE,** 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. A few highlights: Pat Kilbride on Oct. 17; the Blue Chieftains on Oct. 20; the Senders on Oct. 22; the Phantoms, the Popes, and more on Oct. 24. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at ten, Fridays at midnight, and Saturdays at eleven.

**DELTA 88,** 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—Plenty of the soul-food necessities—stacks of napkins and glasses of water big enough to put out a brushfire—and a truckload of peckerwood flotsam. (If this place weren't a restaurant, it could be a flea market.) The clientele is mainly Northern urban. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays and zydeco on Thursdays. Music after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

**FAT TUESDAY'S,** 190 *Third* Ave., at *17th* St. (*533-7902*)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. **JON HENDRICKS & COMPANY** are at work here Oct. 16-21; singer **ANITA O'DAY,** who stops over here whenever she gets a chance, will begin a week-long stint on Oct. 23. Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of *reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight.*

**FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION,** 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The pianists who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. The piano-bass team of **CAROL BRITTO** and **GARY MAZZAROPPI** hold forth Oct. 16-21; Gloria Cooper leads a trio from the keyboard on Oct. 22; and pianist **ADAM MAKOWICZ** starts up on Oct. 23. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

**GONZALEZ Y GONZALEZ,** 625 Broadway, at Houston St. (473-8787)—Loud, brash, and big—de rigueur for the lower-Broadway dining scene. The theme is, of course, Mexican, and you get the whole enchilada—a giant cactus here, a parade-float sombrero there, animal skulls, religious artifacts, and jalapeño clusters everywhere. The stage is in the rear, about a city block from the entrance.

**KILIMANJARO,** 531 W. 19th St. (*627-2333*)—The northern branch of the popular Washington, D.C., night spot. As the name suggests, African music is the sine qua non, be it live or d.j.-spun. Calypso, reggae, and world-beat formats also turn up; in any case, the huge dance floor seldom lies fallow. Wisdom, a reggae band, and the Gambian outfit Mangara are here on Oct. 17; the Ghanaian performer Gyedu Blay Ambulley and the reggae group Adja claim Oct. 19; Zaire's Rashid King comes in on Oct. 20; and the [illegible] reggae again on Oct. 24, with Bankie Banx. Music from eleven-thirty.

**KNITTING FACTORY,** 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. *(219-3055)—Situated in a neigh*borhood that boasts the Puck Building to the west and a host of windshield washers to the east, this modest space provides a forum for free-thinking musicians. Beat and melody are optional, "music" and "noise" relative terms. Peter Holsapple and Chris Stamey are in evidence on Oct. 20. Other highlights: **BROWN OUT,** with **JAMES BROWN,** on Oct. 17; Third Person, an improvisational duo, on Oct. 18; and **ELLIOTT SHARP'S CARBON** on Oct. 19. Music after nine.

**LAUTERBACH'S BROOKLYN BEAT,** 335 Prospect Ave., at Sixth Ave., Brooklyn. (1-718 788-9140)—A grungy but well-intentioned watering hole devoted to homegrown Brooklyn bands. The

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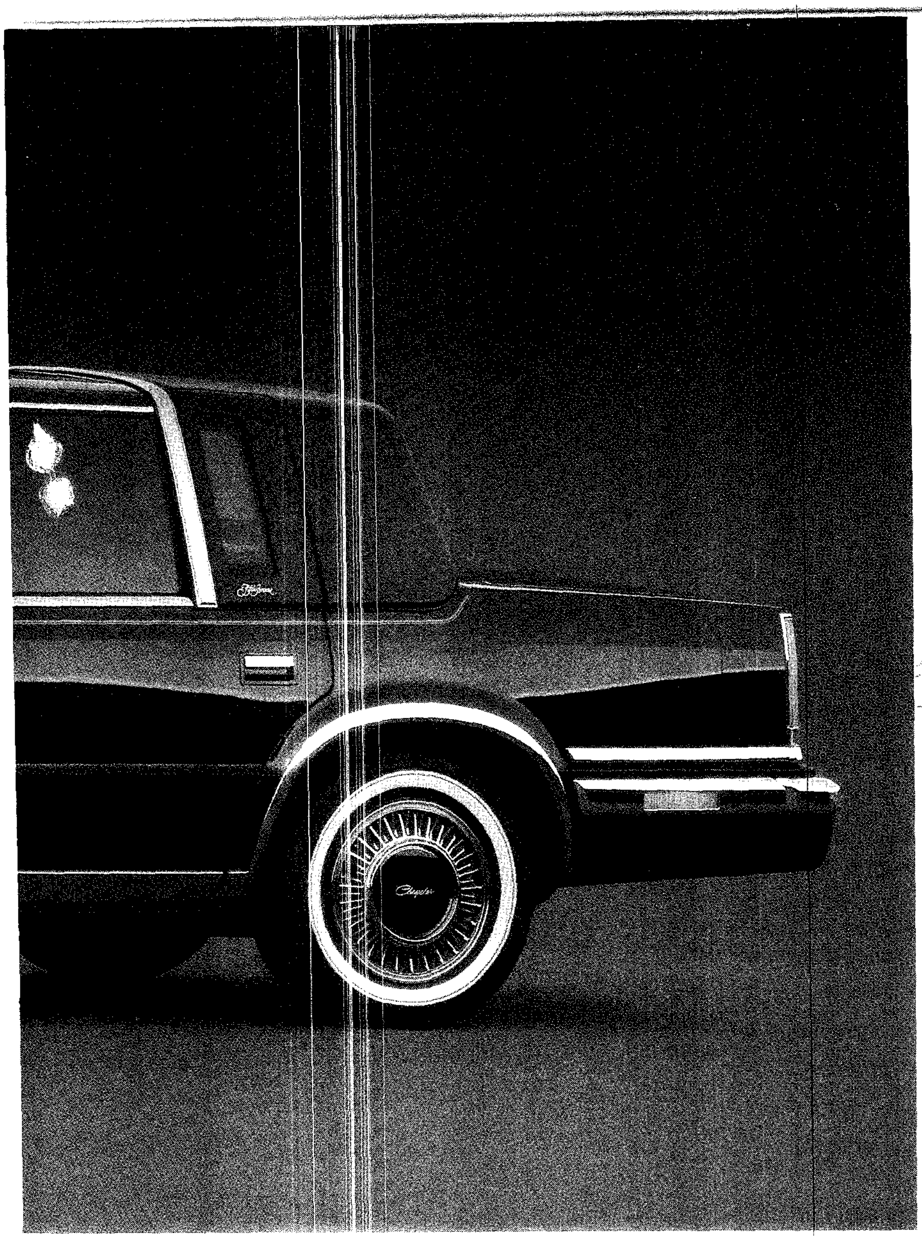

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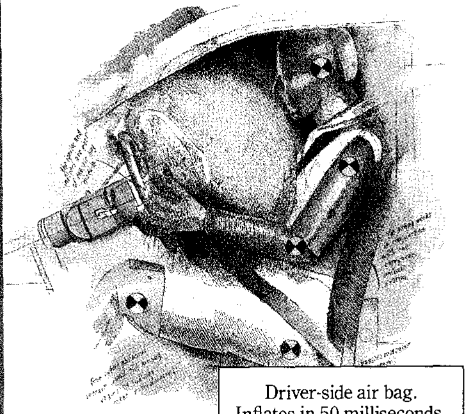

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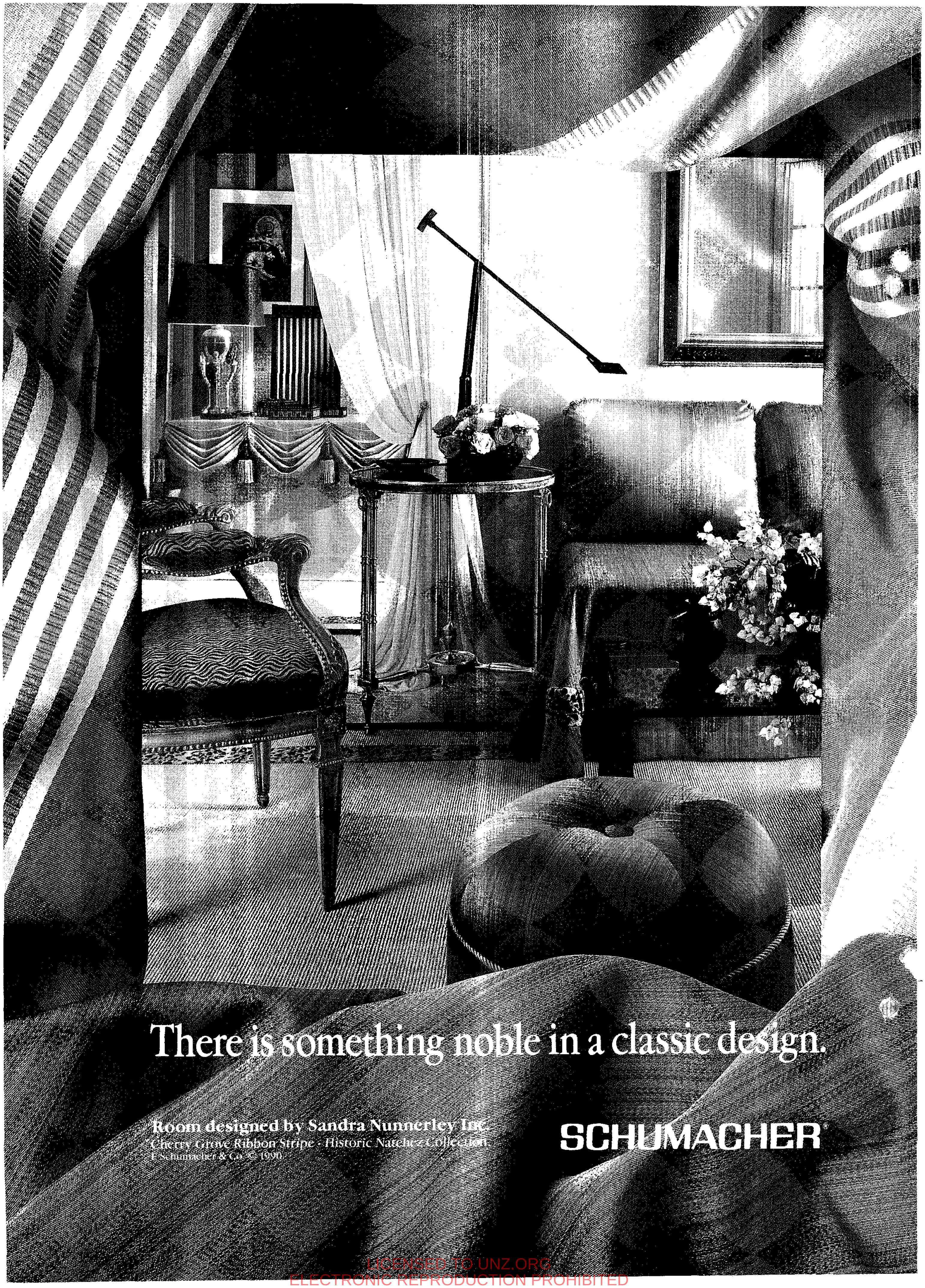
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emphasis here is on exposed cement, although one wall is decorated with Polaroids—"St. Patty's 1986" (people in green hats and leis), "New Year's 1988-1989" (people in red hats and leis). Lauterbach's microwave menu includes shepherd's pie and chicken parmigiana, but the musical menu is almost always a better bet.

**Ludlow Street Café,** 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—A modest below-stairs room that looks like a slightly spruced-up tenement-building apartment. There's cheap Ecuadoran food, a Greater East Village crowd, and, every Monday night, **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mix of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, the Velvets, and various pop curiosities. Music starts at ten-thirty.

**Manny's Car Wash,** 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the fluorescent sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. **JIMMY ROGERS** is here on Oct. 16; **CLARENCE (GATEMOUTH) BROWN** claims Oct. 17; and **A.C. REED AND THE SPARKPLUGS** perform Oct. 19-20. Music from nine.

**Marquee,** 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club just off the West Side Highway (and no relation to the famed London venue). **JOE JACKSON** comes in Oct. 18-19, along with singer **LORI CARSON.**

**Michael's Pub,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes—has more of a country-club feel. Clarinettist **DON BYRON** *and his ten-piece orchestra can* be found here through Oct. 20, playing klezmer music—traditional Eastern European Yiddish music—by Mickey Katz, an entertainer and songwriter who ruled the Borscht Belt in the forties and fifties. **JOEL GREY,** who is Mr. Katz's son, will sing with the orchestra Oct. 18-20. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining. Closed Sundays.

**Rainbow & Stars,** 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A great, pricey cabaret in the sky. Singer **JULIE WILSON,** who has a dark, gravelly voice and a thing for American songwriters, will begin a three-week stay here on Oct. 16. Shows from nine. Closed Sundays and Mondays. Dining.

**Red Blazer Too,** 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** and Wednesdays to Stan Rubin's band. Fridays are the province of Bob Leive and the Worcester Street Trolley Jazz Band, and Bob Cantwell and His Stompers claim Saturdays. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

**Ritz,** 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—A rock establishment where the customer is not always right. If you're willing to endure proof-of-drinking-age wristbands, primitive notions of crowd control, and a staff of "I breaka you face" security people, *you can usually find* some worthwhile bands. Jazz-rock guitarist **JOHN MC LAUGHLIN'S** trio appears on Oct. 19, along with the Steve Morse band. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven on Fridays and Saturdays.

**Spo-dee-o-dee,** 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A night club in a part of Chelsea the real-estate agents don't show you. It's a modest-sized space with a dance floor, a stage (there's live music seven nights a week), and a pell-mell décor: Victorian-style chandeliers, movie-theatre drapes, murals of Cotton Club-era dancers. At peak hours (late), you'll get an eyeful of waves, perms, teased and sprayed locks, lip gloss, pumps, fishnets, fringed jackets, leather pants, and designer-outlet new-wave apparel.

**Sweet Basil,** 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. The **MAL WALDRON** quintet holds forth Oct. 16-21; the **TIMELESS ALL STARS** begin work on Oct. 23. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

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| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | | | |

**Tramps,** 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that's like an urban Disneyland (Chelsea Billiards, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a lot bigger and a lot slicker than the old Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Oct. 19-20: "Black Top Review," with Earl King, Grady Gaines, James (Thunderbird) Davis, and others.

**Village Gate,** 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room—which, with its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a live-in Nevelson sculpture—salsa bands pack them in on Mondays. Oct. 22 is the province of **TITO PUENTE,** the white-haired bandleader and timbales whiz. Mr. Puente and his orchestra are joined by guest soloist **STANLEY TURRENTINE,** the tenor-sax man.

**Village Vanguard,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The late Max Gordon, who opened this holiest of jazz shrines in 1935, once described the club's early patrons as a mix of "poets, W.P.A. writers, hustlers, broads on the make, and moochers." **BUCK CLAYTON**—a trumpeter for Count Basie as far back as the thirties—leads his swing band *here through Oct. 21.* The exceptional (and exceptionally young) trumpeter **ROY HARGROVE** brings a quintet in as of Oct. 23. A big band formerly led by the late Mel Lewis holds sway on Mondays. Music after ten.

**Wetlands,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Two floors of no-nuke veggie entertainment and consciousness-raising. Listen to bands play in the Summer of Love-muralled back room; buy a tie-dyed T-shirt at the Volkswagen-bus curio shop; catch up on current events at the bulletin board and community calendar. Or, if you'd rather just be mellow, crash out in the basement hippie love pad. **ANDREW TOSH** and the **TOSH BAND** will be here Oct. 18-19. Max Creek and Savoy Truffle perform on Oct. 20. **NEW POTATO CABOOSE,** which will play here on Oct. 24, is a Washington-based outfit that works hard for the money: their sets run from sea shanteys to gospel to country to "Rocky Raccoon" to a whole lot of seventies-style rock and roll. The group plays a long, full set, replete with solos of every variety.

## EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THERE'S the A list. There's the B list. And there's *that* list: the dreaded compendium of schmoozers and moochers, the faintly talented and the once famous, the badly lifted and the barely literate, who descend upon any new club fool enough to have courted them for its entrée into night life. You can't miss 'em: they're too tan and too loud, always hungry and unquenchably thirsty and seriously overdressed, usually in something cheaply sequinned and slightly stained. At a recent party at Tatou (151 East 50th Street)—the handsome if too rococo supper club/restaurant/disco that has had more unofficial openings in the last month than there have been TV series featuring Nancy Walker—they must have guzzled the place out of every ounce of vodka at the bar. Even soup kitchens don't have food lines this stalwart and eager. (Dinner was pretty good, actually, but this group would have come back for seconds had the meal been granola in grape juice.)

They shoot Studio 54 warhorses, don't they? Well, they should. The assemblage—former Oscar nominees, children of famous mailmen, freshly stabbed club promoters, former TV-series regulars, publicists with their early-bird-special meal tickets, models/call boys, and downtown journalists who can't get enough of social disaster—was so terrifying that nocturnal scribe emeritus Stephen Saban and performance artist Fred Rothbell-Mista spent most of the evening selecting whom they would load onto an imaginary bus that would, Saban said, "go crashing over a precipice, eliminating its inhabitants once and for all." A touch draconian, perhaps—you had to be there.

## IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Next Wave Festival**—The Ninagawa Company, *from Japan, in its production of* "Macbeth." Oct. 19-20 at 7, Oct. 21 at 2 and 7, Oct. 22-23 at 8, and Oct. 24 at 11 A.M. and 8. Through Oct. 26. . . . ¶ "Polygraph," a play written by Robert Lepage and Marie Brassard, and directed by Mr. Lepage. Oct. 23 at 7 and Oct. 24 at 8. Through Oct. 28. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. The festival continues through Dec. 9.)

**John Kelly**—In "Love of a Poet," a deconstructed version of Schumann's song cycle "Dichterliebe." (Battery Maritime Building, Whitehall St. near the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Oct. 17-20 at 8. For information about tickets, call 924-0077.)

**"Dangerous Ideas"**—A performance-art fest. Oct. 18 at 8: Nai'mah Hassan, House o' Pork, Todd Alcott, and Wallace Shawn. . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 8: Alva Rogers, Roger Guenveur Smith, Sapphire, and Dark Star. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 8: Laurie Anderson, Kedric Robin Wolfe, Adolphe Beckh, Robbie McCauley, and Bob Holman. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 10:30: Mr. Smith, John Fleck, Sara Ransom, and Penny Arcade. . . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 7: Lenora Champagne, Paul Zaloom, Mr. Fleck, Tim Miller, and others. (Triplex, 199 Chambers St. 618-1980.)

**La Gran Scena Opera Company**—Divas in drag, performing excerpts from "Cavalleria Rusticana," "Rigoletto," "La Gioconda," and "Tosca." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 18-20 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 7.)

**Holly Hughes**—In "World Without End." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Oct. 18-20 at 9:30. Through Oct. 27.)

**Brian Eno**—Giving a lecture in which he will employ a CD player, a turntable, and an overhead projector. (Museum of Modern Art Auditorium, 11 W. 53rd St. Oct. 23 at 8. For information about tickets, call 708-9500.)

**Dance Theatre Workshop**—Oct. 19-20 at 11: Katherine Griffith in her solo work "Miss Pretty Hand: Medium Rare or Hell Done." Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ Oct. 22-23 at 8: Sekou Sundiata and his band, Dadahdoodahda. (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

# ART

WHILE the title "Women in Mexico" suggests an enormous and ferociously dramatic tapestry, the exhibition so named (at the National Academy of Design, Fifth Avenue at 89th Street; through December 2) is in essence a sampler. This is not a complaint: the show is fast-paced and a lot of fun. Only twenty-two artists are included, all twentieth-century figures. We begin with the remarkable generation of Frida Kahlo, María Izquierdo, Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, Tina Modotti, and other luminaries in Mexico City as well as North America and Europe during the cosmopolitan period that immediately preceded and followed the Second World War. And we are brought up to the present with work by artists now in their thirties, for example the spooked still-lifes and gritty ex-voto mythologies of a wonderful photographer named Flor Garduño. The witty Cornell-like boxes of Lucero Isaac most ably represent the generation in between.

Surrealism, nowhere more apt, varied, or unfettered than in Mexico, dominates the show in its myriad guises, in full fetishistic regalia, and with a formidable array of coiffures. The astonishing Kahlo—whose violently excoriated self-image is rapidly becoming as familiar to viewers as the Vermeer girl's softly cocooned face—holds forth in braids and flowing tresses, in Spanish combs and crowns of flowers, from wheelchairs, hospital beds, and assorted virtual thrones, at the emotional epicenter of the show. But her less famous contemporaries—the painfully wispy Leonora Carrington and, especially, Remedios Varo—are in this context as intriguing. Carrington's "Self-Portrait" from 1936-37 is of a highly refined Amazon in tight white pants and high-heeled booties—it suggests a Sinéad O'Connor with hair. We may detect the incomparable influence of Max Ernst, once Carrington's lover, but also of Watteau and his later disciples, such as Liotard and most of the eighteenth-century portrait-painting Venetians. Varo is another matter—stranger and stronger. In "The Call" (1961), for instance, we find a blazing, queen-bee figure of a woman whose irradiated hair, shaped like spermatozoa, trails behind her and upward to form Saturn's rings.

## MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**METROPOLITAN MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" includes four hundred works of art from the pre-Columbian era through 1950. . . . ¶ "Wright of Derby." This retrospective of paintings by Joseph Wright (1734-97)—the upright Midlands product of eighteenth-century empiricism—is a must for Anglophiles and history buffs. "The Widow of an Indian Chief Watching the Arms of Her Deceased Husband" is a *ne* plus ultra of European period exoticism concerning the Americas. And a portrait of one Brooke Boothby, dated 1781, is a brilliant study of cultivated English lassitude, as well as an early blossoming of the melancholy *fleurs* that would be so carefully plucked and arranged during the following century. Through Dec. 2. . . . ¶ Nineteen chalk-and-graphite drawings by John Singleton Copley (1738-1815). They are mostly studies for his enormous paintings, such as "The Ascension," "Siege of Gibraltar," and his portrait of John Adams. . . . ¶ "Glories of the Past" is an exhibition of bronze and marble sculptures, vases, and jewelry made between 5000 B.C. and A.D. 800 that focusses on works from the Mediterranean and the Near East. . . . ¶ Eighteenth-century Italian drawings, including works by Francesco Guardi, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, and others. Through Dec. 9. . . . ¶ Fifteen American quilts and coverlets, made between 1803 and 1930, are on view. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**MUSEUM OF MODERN ART,** 11 W. 53rd St.—"High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture" is divided into four themes (graffiti, caricature, comics, advertising) and includes more than two hundred and fifty works. . . . ¶ A video installation by Gary Hill, consisting of body images displayed through several stripped cathode-ray tubes. Starts Oct. 19. . . . ¶ "First Light," a suite of twenty black-and-white etchings by James Turrell. Through Nov. 13. . . . ¶ "Diagramming Microchips" is a small exhibition of the large, colorful, computer-generated diagrams used to design microchips. Through Oct. 30. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

**GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

**WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Mind Over Matter," a show of more than fifty conceptually oriented works by Ashley Bickerton, Annette Lemieux, Nayland Blake, Tishan Hsu, Ronald Jones, and Liz Larner. . . . ¶ A retrospective featuring ninety-five paintings, constructions, and drawings by Burgoyne Diller (1906-65). . . . ¶ A selection of animal sculptures from the museum's collection will be on view in the lobby. Included are works by Hunt Diederich, Gaston Lachaise, and Alexander Calder. Starts Oct. 19. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

**BROOKLYN MUSEUM,** Eastern Parkway—A lobby installation by Joseph Kosuth, who has selected works from the museum's collection that at one time or another may have been deemed offensive. Through Dec. 3. . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixty paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917). . . . ¶ "Milton Avery in Black and White" is a display of eighty drawings in pencil, ink, and crayon made by Avery between 1929 and 1959. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ "Caribbean Festival Arts" presents costumes, masks, videotapes, music, and photographs related to the traditional celebrations of Jonkonnu, Carnival, and the Islamic Hosay. The thirty-six costume ensembles include materials such as mirrors, feathers, sequins, and beads, and range from human scale to sixteen feet tall. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fish hooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm spathe, raffia, and bamboo. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

**ASIA SOCIETY,** Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Court Arts of Indonesia." This land of islands and volcanoes was not a unified nation until the very recent postcolonial period; with certain pockets of military oppression and forced immigration in places like East Timor, it is unclear whether it could be considered unified even today. Throughout much of their history, the Indonesian islands have been ruled by independent courts with distinct cultures. All of this means that attempting to define Indonesian art is a daunting task, but the guest curator here, Dr. Helen Jessup, has managed to form a fascinating, cohesive exhibition. It is meticulously selected and exquisitely installed, with just the right number of pieces to titillate but not overwhelm. Instead of highlighting the better-known wedding-cake architecture, sensual Buddhist sculpture, or magical animist objects, this show focusses on the more culturally unifying court arts. Extraordinary detail abounds, especially in numerous ceremonial lances, which were symbolic expressions of power; very delicate gold jewelry; woven fabrics; and shadow puppets. The Indonesians considered white teeth ugly, and there are several betel-nut sets, used in a process that seems to have been as elaborate a ritual as was the tea ceremony for the Japanese. The show also has some curiosities, including a belt of human hair; a Javanese scroll depicting a royal procession, with a perspective that is part Eastern, part Western, and as wacky as Uccello; a golden skeleton; and a modesty plate, which is a kind of Indonesian fig leaf. Through Dec. 16. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS,** 1040 Grand Concourse—"Visions of Home" is a display of ten prize-winning designs, along with forty other entries, for affordable housing at a specific seven-acre site in the South Bronx. The show is part of this fall's "Home: A Place in the World" series. . . . ¶ Seventy prints produced by El Taller de Gráfica Popular, founded in 1937 in Mexico. The show is part of the series "Mexico: A Work of Art." (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

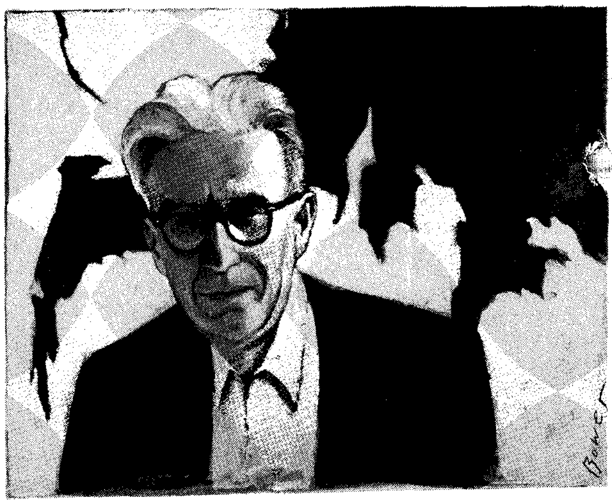
**CHINA INSTITUTE,** 125 E. 65th St.—"The Eccentric Painters of Yangzhou" presents thirty works by eleven unorthodox, innovative artists who lived in Southern China in the eighteenth century. Starts Oct. 20. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

**COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Eighteenth-century scenic and architectural drawings by the theatre designers and builders Francesco and Giovanni Carlo Bibiena. Through Dec. 30. . . . ¶ Two hundred pieces of elaborately worked gold jewelry spanning four thousand years of Grecian culture. From the Benaki Museum, in Athens. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

**FRICK COLLECTION,** 1 E. 70th St.—Among the many strong works on paper here by Adolph Menzel (1815-1905) are a stunning, flesh-warm drawing of the Barberini Faun; deep platonic renderings of suits of armor; and a beautiful sketch, titled "Moltke's Binoculars," of leather long caressed and distressed. Through Nov. 18. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

**GROLIER CLUB,** 47 E. 60th St.—An exhibition of eighty gold-tooled leather bookbindings from Renaissance France and Italy. Through Nov. 24. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**JEWISH MUSEUM,** Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Day in the Warsaw Ghetto." Eighty-five photographs taken in September, 1941, by Heinz Jöst, who was a member of the German Army at the time. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ "Why I Got Into TV and Other Stories," a "mid-career" retrospective of Ilene Segalove's taped stories, radio programs, and photographic collages. Through Nov. 1. . . . ¶ A show of ten paintings and drawings, and a contemporary



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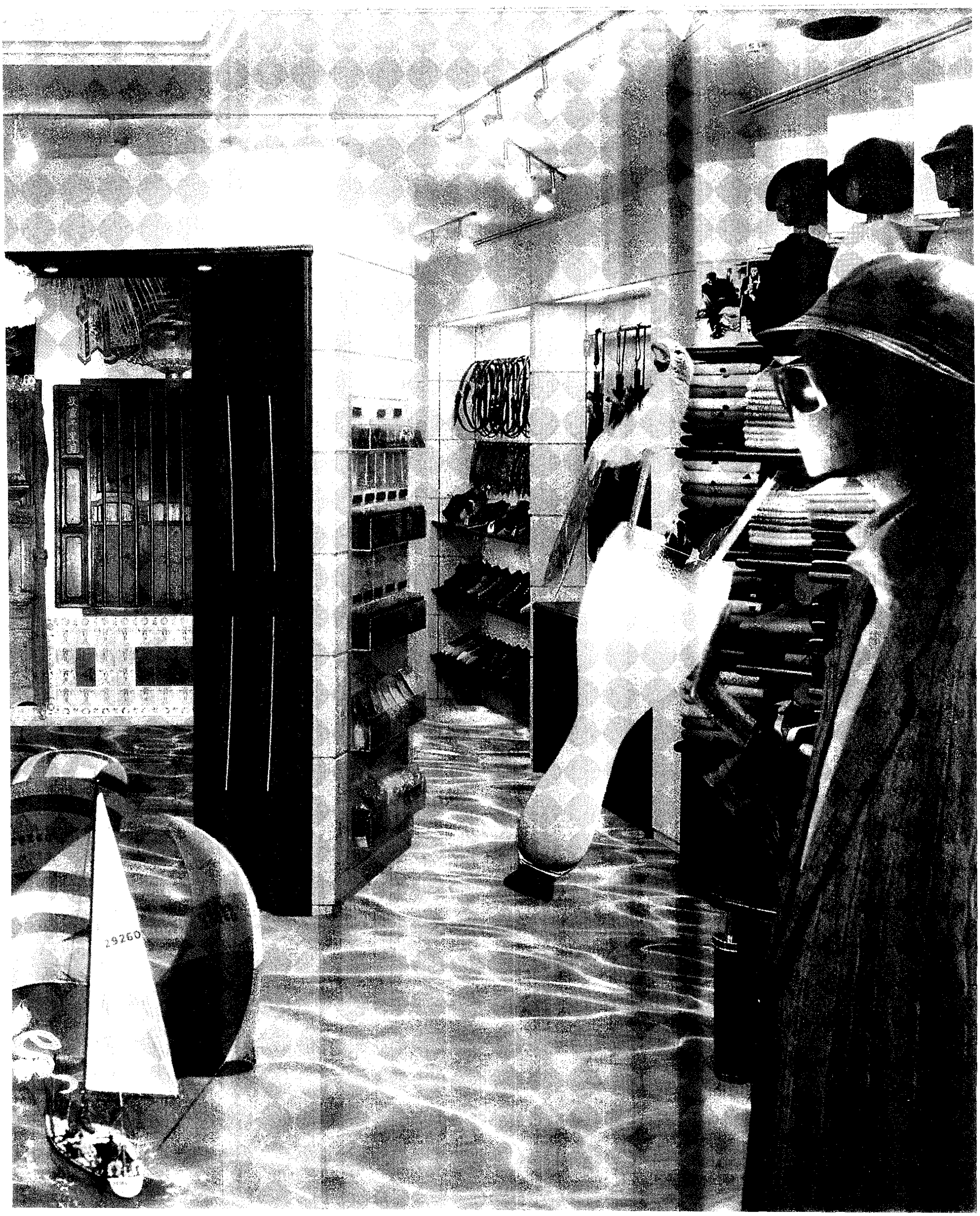

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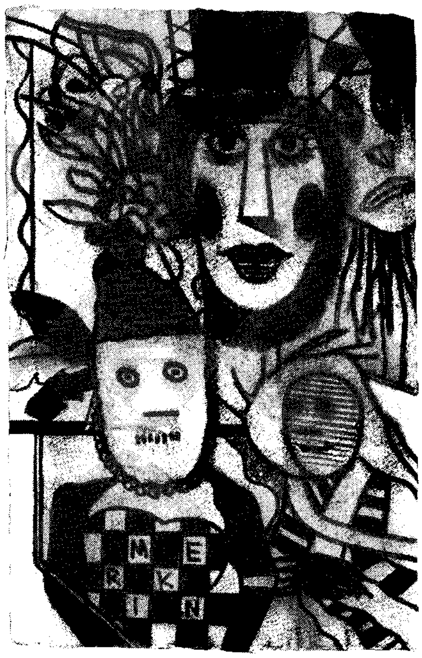
interpretation of a sukkah, or improvised shelter, by the artist Eli Content. Through Nov. 1. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

**Morgan Library,** 29 E. 36th St.—"Treasures of Eton College Library," a selection, from the five-hundred-and-fifty-year-old institution, of more than two hundred manuscripts, rare books, drawings, and watercolors. Included are the first edition of Thomas Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" and the manuscript of "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." Through Nov. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**Museum of the City of New York,** Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Through maps, paintings, photographs, and prints, "Within Bohemia's Borders" documents the turbulent history of Greenwich Village from 1830 to 1930. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**National Academy of Design,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Women in Mexico" presents more than a hundred paintings, drawings, collages, and photographs by twenty-two Mexican women artists. Through Dec. 2. . . . ¶ A retrospective featuring fifty-nine works by Gari Melchers (1860-1932), including portraits, religious scenes, and landscapes. Through Nov. 4. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)



*"Caribbean Festival Arts" at the Brooklyn Museum*

**The New Museum,** 583 Broadway—"From Receiver to Remote Control: The TV Set" features serpentine banks of virtually every TV model and meticulously reconstructed period rooms that attempt to define a sociology of family life as it has revolved around the set. Through Nov. 25. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

**New-York Historical Society,** 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—An exhibition that reunites more than sixty of the American paintings that were displayed at the 1889 World's Fair, in Paris. Included are works by John Singer Sargent, Theodore Robinson, William Merritt Chase, and James McNeill Whistler. Through Nov. 15. . . . ¶ Forty-five platinum-print photographs of New York City by Charles Gilbert Hine (1859-1931). (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—Manuscript fragments, letters, first editions, photographs, and illustrations are all part of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." (Berg Collection. Open daily, except Sundays and Thursdays, 10 to 6.)

**Queens Museum,** Flushing Meadow Park—"Keith Haring: Future Primeval." The art world enacted some of its most callous opportunism on the eager and willing Haring (1958-90), and, as this brilliantly selected show—which makes a point of not being a retrospective—indicates, no other contemporary artist seems to be so known and yet so misunderstood. The operative word in this survey of works from the first half of Haring's brief but loaded career is diversity. Even his earliest student works (1979) display a simultaneous interest in Expressionism and illustration, abstraction and representation, shock and fine design. The kind of Pollocky over-all composition that has fascinated so many artists is reinterpreted by Haring as a camouflage, a means of masking covert imagery with bouncy rhythms, just as he consistently hid some racy sexual scenes behind adorable radiant children. Haring's greatest impact was as a social force, someone who formed a link between the street and art, black and white, kids and adults; this is beautifully portrayed in the selections, which include many preserved subway drawings. In the mid-eighties, when he was a rising worldwide media star, before he was diagnosed with AIDS and his creative activism with ACT UP began, Haring experimented with color, asymmetrical compositions, a more scenelike narrative. These post-pictographic paintings are generally considered inferior; however, the few such works included here are gems and suggest, as a show like this should but rarely does, that further study is in order. Through Nov. 25. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

**Studio Museum in Harlem,** 144 W. 125th St.—"Home: Contemporary Urban Images by Black Photographers." More than ninety works by eleven photographers. Through Dec. 30. . . . ¶ Eighty contemporary works, including paintings, sculptures, photographs, musical instruments, and videotapes, make up "The Blues Aesthetic," a show that explores the impact of African-American culture on twentieth-century art. Through Dec. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

## GALLERIES—UPTOWN

**Frank Stella**—Five metallic paintings from 1959 to 1964. These cool and very elegant works—haute minimalism *avant la lettre*—look miraculously fresh and unfingered despite their notoriously delicate, smudgeable surfaces. Two abstract "portraits" stand out: the silvered, high-shouldered "Luis Miguel Dominguin," whose shape suggests a chasuble tailor-made for the toreador; and "Ileana Sonnabend," a broad-based trapezoid in heavenly pink. Through Oct. 20. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

**Mexican Art**—As part of the Mexican celebration sweeping New York this fall, Mary-Anne Martin, New York's premier dealer of Latin-American art, is presenting a fine selection of work that, like the Met's extravaganza, spans from Olmec to contemporary times. The ancient pieces are mostly generic, but a few are quite stunning. The twentieth-century works are well selected, and they include paintings by some artists not on display elsewhere. Among the highlights here are Frida Kahlo's "Diego y Yo," a portrait of the artist with her husband, the philandering Diego Rivera, depicted in a pendant pinned to the long-suffering Kahlo's forehead. Her expression is a remarkable combination of fierceness and pain. There is a series of new monumental sculptures by Rufino Tamayo, as well as fine paintings by the creaturely surrealist Leonora Carrington and the modernist Carlos Mérida. There is also a section of a mural Rivera painted in 1933 for the New Workers' School, on Fourteenth Street. It is an excellent example of Mexican mural work—a group portrait of Communist and Socialist bigwigs, like Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky. Two American leftists hold a banner that reads "Workers of the World Unite," a directive the leaders themselves never heeded. Through Dec. 1. (23 E. 73rd St.) . . . ¶ At CDS gallery, a similar list of twentieth-century Mexican masters is featured. There is a fine Cubist Rivera as well as a few good early works by Tamayo. But for the most part the selections are of lesser quality. Through Dec. 29. (13 E. 75th St. Open Mondays.)

**Short List**—**Fanny Brennan,** Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. (open Mondays, through Oct. 26); **Adolph Gottlieb,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Nov. 3); **Carlo Maria Mariani,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 3); **Kurt Schwitters,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through Nov. 24); **Joseph Stella** and **Arthur Dove,** York, 21 E. 65th St. (through Nov. 17).

## GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

**Harry Holtzman** (1912-87)—Drawings from the nineteen-thirties and sculpture from the nineteen-eighties. Holtzman's drawings suggest an almost impressionistic, loose-wristed interpretation of Mondrian's classically rectilinear model, while the sculptures suggest the opposite. They are bold, handsome, and rather rigid homages. With their wood panels in primary colors and their naturalistic elements—chunks of stone like those in Japanese rock gardens—they also resemble screens and room dividers by Eames and furniture designs by George Nakashima. Through Oct. 27. (Washburn, 41 E. 57th St.)

**John Hull**—The small paintings and drawings on display here were produced last year when the painter was artist-in-residence for two weeks with the Louisville Redbirds. (The large paintings are more recent.) Baseball and art have never been happy bedfellows, but what makes these works interesting is that Hull has a very sophisticated sense of composition. He also has chosen not to deify these working-class heroes but to portray their moments of waiting, which sometimes seem to go on forever. Through Oct. 31. (Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

**Paul Hunter**—Awfully trite "paintings" with objects such as crack vials, cigarette butts, bits of colored glass, and an occasional leaf, all stuck in layers of colored wax. Through Oct. 20. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

**Ernest Trova**—Shiny, stainless-steel featureless figures that look a lot like an artist's mannequin. They are alone or paired, and range from tchotchke-size to life-size. Trova continues in an existential line traceable from Giacometti through Tooker; his generalized figure can be seen as a precedent for Haring's Everyman; and he has been working seriously for decades, but there's something sad about this work: his best current efforts are no less kitschy than were Dali's worst. Through Oct. 20. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Short List**—**Jean Arp,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 10); **Hyman Bloom,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 8); **Theophilus Brown,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **Giorgio Cavallon,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 27); **Lovis Corinth,** Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 3); **Robert Cottingham,** Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 31); **Sam Francis** and **Friedel Dzubas,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 3); **Spencer Frederick Gore,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Nov. 10); **Robert Graham,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 31); **Robert Kushner** and **Nam June Paik,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 10); **Gabriel Laderman,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (through Nov. 14); **Myron Stout,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through Nov. 17).

## GALLERIES—SoHo

**Carl Andre**—Andre's floor sculptures of grids of zinc and copper plates have startled viewers for many reasons, not the least of which is that they are meant to be walked on, like rugs. These new ones, made of limestone and copper, also hug the floor and they are simple, beautiful, even a bit sensuous. They must be the first of his floor pieces to be accompanied by a "Do Not Touch" sign; they're much too obviously elegant to invite such direct interaction. Through Oct. 31. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

**Michael Biberstein**—New paintings of misty landscapes juxtaposed with an occasional black panel. Most of them are handsome, but they are too highly indebted to the Chinese. There are also two canvases that look like a spelunker's fantasies. Through Oct. 27. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

**Nayland Blake**—There has been much murmuring about this artist over the past year or so. Now, between his representation in a group exhibition at the Whitney and this solo show, New Yorkers are given their first chance to consider his work in depth. These mixed-media assemblages of fetishized objects—using such materials as bird feathers, a Morrissey poster, potpourri, and faux tortoiseshell plates edged in gilt crowns—come in several different varieties. Some are overly precious and others border on the dumbly blunt, but many have a chilling strength, particularly

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## ART–Cont'd

the ones that play off the sexual/medical angle with S & M restraints and surgical tables. In one piece, a hinged sexual gizmo consisting of a dog collar attached to a metal pole juts out from the wall just above floor level, as if awaiting a victim in need of restraint. It is an effective portrayal of degradation, one that the art world might find aptly metaphoric. But however startling these pieces may be, their bite comes from a much more subtle characteristic. Unlike a number of the works at the Whitney that are made of elements both functional and in a state of perpetual decomposition, most of these seem frozen in a Koonsian state of never-to-be-usedness. In Blake's hands this quality becomes brooding, haunting, as if he were making souvenirs of experiences unlived. Through Nov. 3. (Petersburg, 130 Prince St.)

**Mark Innerst**—This artist specializes in time-warp curiosities. His paintings are exquisitely executed with a steady hand and lots of Old Master glazing. They are little worlds, or fragments of worlds, beautifully framed. Some recall the American Precisionists, others English landscape painting, and still others the color patches of Paul Klee. Through Oct. 27. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

**Sol LeWitt / Giovanni Anselmo**—The best-realized installations of wall drawings by this Soul King of Conceptual Art offer the viewer an experience that is at once visually enveloping and intellectually tonic, raising the dust and cobwebs from one's spiritual or psychic apparatus in much the same way that brilliantly performed music does. The blue crayon grid from 1972—with its angles and arcs, its intersecting segments, its "Straight and Not Straight Lines"—is a Westerner's world-music concerto. And "Sixty-two Randomly Placed Points Connected by Straight Lines," in charcoal, a 1990 update of an older work, conveys the dizzying precision of computer graphics through what appears to be a collective memory of Leonardo's touch. / Arguably the most elegantly expressive and least hokey of the artists associated with the Arte Povera movement. Anselmo's 1969 "Respiro," a floor piece that suggests a contemporary Atlas parable (Atlas *breathed!*, and put down his load), consists of two long iron beams set end to end, separated by a natural sponge. Through Nov. 21. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St.)

**Richard Nonas**—An impeccable installation of two new steel floor pieces and one small wall piece by a low-key, underrated sculptor. The largest work, "Where None. (Unaccompanied Steel Suite, for Pablo Casals)"—in honor of the late Samuel Beckett as well as the late cellist—is a slow progression of steel beams whose gradated curve was artfully echoed, on a recent sunny day, by the angles at which the gallery's nice big windows were opened. The smaller floor piece, titled "Ethnology," consists of many small, L-shaped steel sculptures that suggest language particles or fragments. Nonas shares a number of formal attributes with Walter De Maria, and while less vaultingly ambitious and mysterious, his work is ultimately more sympathetic. Through Oct. 20. (Burgin, 130 Prince St.)

**Shelley Reed**—These paintings will not change the way you see the world, but they may amuse you. Reed has taken details from some favorite early Flemish works and blown them up in black-and-white paint. In her painting of the choir from Van Eyck's "Ghent Altarpiece" the artist has slightly altered the facial expressions so that they now range from annoyance to pain, suggesting that the angelic singers had more than their fair share of toothaches. Through Oct. 25. (Cutler, 593 Broadway.)

**"The Last Decade: American Artists of the 80's"**—This show is little more than a best-seller list, a Sotheby's preview masquerading as a historical overview. Not an ounce of hindsight can be found here: the inclusions are so predictable that even for the casual observer the exhibition may prove redundant. There are two clever juxtapositions: McCollum's surrogate paintings, Tansey's surrogate painter, and Bidlo's surrogate masterpiece; and the history of the squiggle, from Garet to Dunham to Taafe to Steinbach to Lasker. But over all, this soulless procession of single wares provides little to think about, except for the fact that of the thirty-five artists represented here only four are women. Through Oct. 27. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

**Short List**—**WALLACE BERMAN,** Louver, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 10); **SUZANNE BOCANEGRA,** and **JOAN SNYDER,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through Nov. 3); **JEFFREY BROSK,** Rosenberg, 115 Wooster St. (through Oct. 20); **CHUCK CONNELLY,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through Nov. 10); **ROBERT DE NIRO,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through Nov. 10); **HELMUT FEDERLE,** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. (through Nov. 17); **DAN FLAVIN,** Rubin Spangle, 395 West Broadway (through Nov. 10); **MARCO GASTINI,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (through Oct. 27); **YVONNE JACQUETTE,** Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Oct. 31); **PAT LASCH,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through Oct. 27); **HILLARY LEONE AND JENNIFER MACDONALD,** Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway (through Nov. 3); **ROBERT LONGO,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through Nov. 10); **SUSAN NORRIE,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through Nov. 7); **ADRIAN PIPER,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through Nov. 3); **HOLT QUENTEL** and **DENISE MARIKA,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through Nov. 3); **KAY ROSEN** and **HIRSCH PERLMAN,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through Nov. 3); **FRED SANDBACK,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (through Nov. 3); **SUSAN SILAS,** Fiction-Nonfiction, 21 Mercer St. (through Nov. 10); **CLYFFORD STILL,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (through Nov. 10).

### OTHER GALLERIES

**Lutz Bacher**—Although this work seems somewhat unformed, the issues are timely and interesting. The most resolved (and least original) piece uses photos and text to document paparazzo Ron Galella's relentless pursuit of Jackie O., and it raises questions about fame and privacy. In another work, metal drawers contain folded T-shirts printed with psychological quandaries of the yawningly familiar kind: "What I needed from my mother and didn't get was" and "One of the things I'm angry about is." But if you read across the piece quickly from shirt to shirt, a nice rhythm develops. The resulting poem contrasts curiously with the references to exposure and merchandising. Through Oct. 27. (Watson, 241 Lafayette St.)

**Peter Dean**—In this survey of sorts the artist proves that he can push a lot of brightly colored paint around with great flair and that he can dabble in all the politically correct themes. But even at their best these paintings are little more than a reworking of Ensorian grotesqueries. When Dean slows down, tempers his brushwork, and chooses a darker, Velázquezian palette, you want to root for him, but then the paintings wind up looking like second-rate Larry Rivers. Through Oct. 27. (Alternative Museum, 17 White St.)

**Maria Nordman**—The elusive artist presented a public art work in New York this June at the entrance to Central Park at Fifth Avenue and 60th Street—a Japanese-style house for experiencing the flow of the day and the activity of the city, and for considering the nature of shelter. Now the structure has been dismantled, and its tinted windows have been set up like screens that play off natural light. The walls and notched beams have been grouped and piled; not quite minimalist art, not quite lumberyard stock, but somehow with the aesthetic order of both. To the disassembled house have been added two plates, two pitchers, and two glasses—a few humble suggestions of the passage of time and life. It is a disarmingly earthy presentation. Upstairs is a sweet and precious display of pairs of drawings that viewers may slide out of standing wood boxes. The best consist of spray-painted spots in various colors that glow when light shines through them. Through June 21. (Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Opens at noon Thursdays through Sundays.)

**Artists Space**—It seems like it was just a few years ago that a premium was placed on the discovery of new talent, and up until quite recently the search was led by Artists Space, the elder statesman of alternative arts organizations. One of the institution's most attractive programs has been its open-access slide registry, from which the careers of many promising unknowns have been launched. But this year's exhibition of works selected from the registry is dismal, like one of those dreary student affairs from an overinformed outpost. It suggests that New York is no longer a viable breeding ground for young artists, and whether or not this picture is accurate, the alternative system is clearly in need of some rethinking. Through Nov. 3. (223 West Broadway.)

**"Against Nature: Japanese Art in the Eighties"**—A truly interesting exhibition that sends the mind in many different directions. This is no ordinary nationalist show but an attempt to define a set of unique cultural collisions facing today's artmaker in Japan, a place that does not have a concept equivalent to what we call "art." High points include an extraordinarily beautiful video-and-audio work by Tatsuo Miyajima, some wittily disturbing photos by Yasumasa Morimura that re-create famous art works, and a haunting wood sculpture—a kind of ghost of two paintings—by Shinro Ohtake. Although the work may be seen as derivative of Western art, what is evident here is a struggle with what it means to engage in cultural production. The ten artists for the most part have not exhibited outside Japan. Through Oct. 27. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Place.)

## PHOTOGRAPHY

THERE'S been a buzz about Nan Goldin's pictures for a few years, and during this time her work has made the journey from being known only in the underground to being recognized by the photographic establishment. Now, at Pace-MacGill (32 East 57th Street; through October 20), we can see how her vision holds up in the broader context of the mainstream. The answer is: impressively. Her hip-looking pictures represent the power of love. Goldin's passion for her subjects is undilutable. She is not a tourist on a quick-stop trip through the colorful world of Bohemia but a recorder of her own terrain. You can feel her personal involvement in these pictures—that's what makes them convincing. Most moving is the group of photos of Goldin's friend Cookie Mueller. A kind of beauty burns through these pictures, which capture moments in the life of this original writer, who died because of AIDS. The images are warm and honest, and they are about families, immediate and surrogate. Mostly they are about living with everything you've got. They're also about approaching death with tears up front and spirit intact.

**Man Ray** (1890-1976)—A show, titled "Man Ray/Bazaar Years: A Fashion Retrospective," that contains more than this heading may suggest. Fashion and advertising turn out to have been natural stimuli for Man Ray's Surrealist vocabulary. What could be more surreal than a lipstick story featuring a closeup of a thirties beauty—in black-and-white, except for hot-red lips—with the boldface headline "THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE"? Through Nov. 25. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

**Short List**—**JEANNETTE MONTGOMERY BARRON,** Staley-Wise, 177 Prince St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 27); **WERNER BISCHOF,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6; through Nov. 11); **PIERRE DUBREUIL,** Friedman, 1117 Madison Ave., at 83rd St. (open Mondays, through Nov. 16); **MICHAEL EASTMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Oct. 20); **RYUJI MIYAMOTO** and **HIROSHI OSAKA,** Min-Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through Oct. 31); **SYLVIA PLACHY,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (opens at noon, through Oct. 27); **THOMAS RUFF,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. (through Nov. 3); **SKREBNESKI,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Nov. 3); **JOSEF SUDEK,** Photofind, 138 Spring St. (through Oct. 20); **CARRIE MAE WEEMS,** P.P.O.W, 532 Broadway (through Oct. 27); **NEIL WINOKUR,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through Oct. 27), and Borden, 560 Broadway (through Nov. 10); **JOE ZIOLKOWSKI,** Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway (through Oct. 27).

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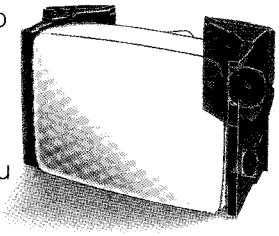

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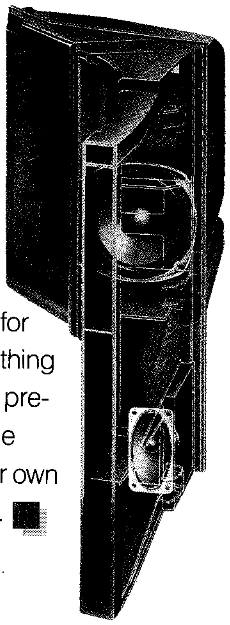

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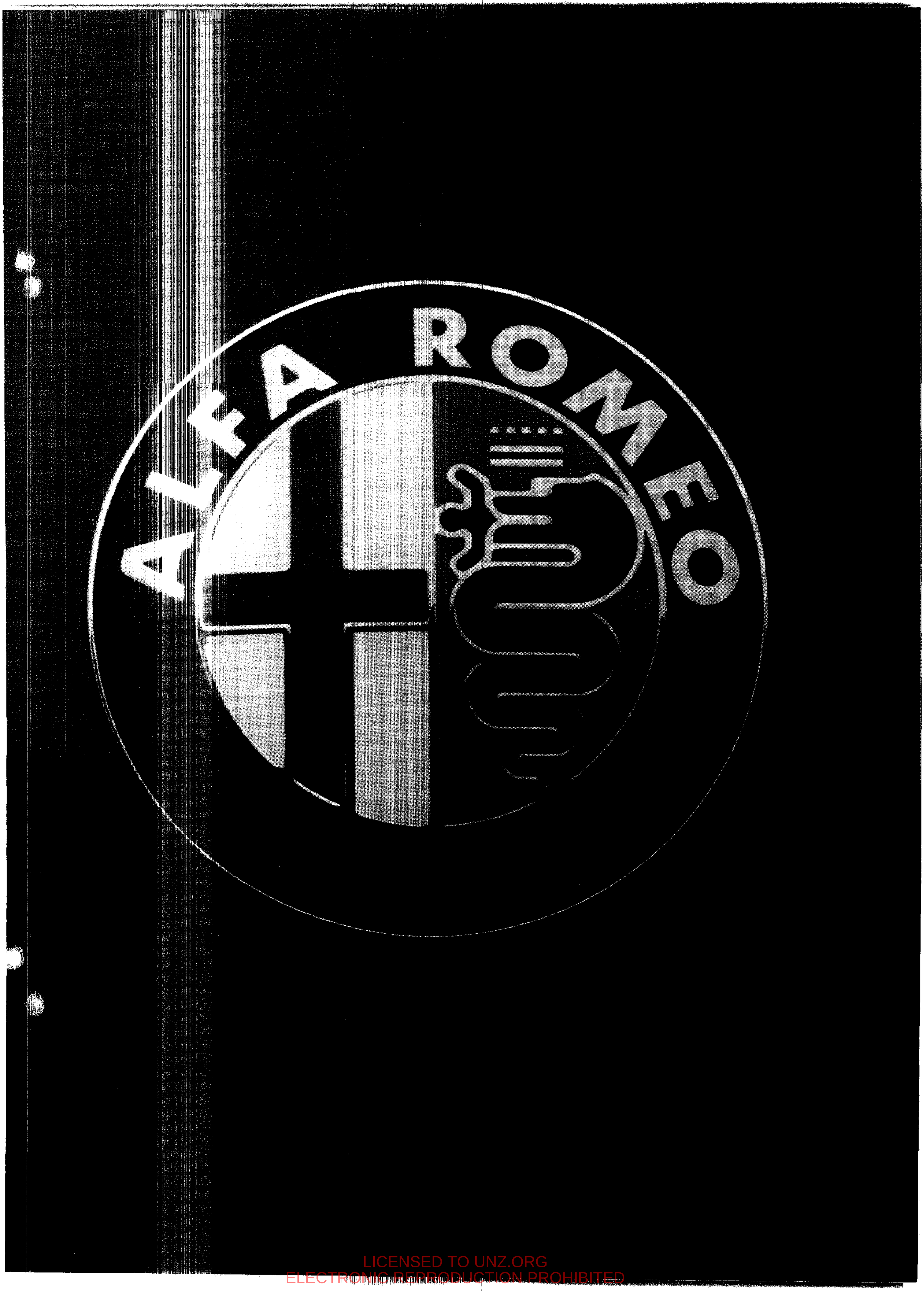
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# MUSIC

ODDLY, literature and the spoken stage seem to lack any major treatment, ancient or modern, of Castor and Polydeuces, the twin brothers who are, thanks to Zeus, still visible to mortals in the constellation of Gemini. Musicians have done better by them. There is a serene minor masterpiece of a Schubert song about the comfort and guidance they offer to seafarers, and there is "Castor et Pollux," Jean-Philippe Rameau's operatic treatment of the events leading up to their placement in the heavens.

Divergent mythical accounts of Castor and Polydeuces turn on a question of paternity. They were sons of Leda and, according to Homer, Tyndareus of Sparta. Others make them sons of Zeus (hence the name Dioscuri, by which many, including Schubert's poet, know them). But most count Castor a mortal son of Tyndareus and Polydeuces an immortal son of Zeus. (Twins sired by different fathers are rare in the ordinary course of events, but not nearly so rare as the transformation of the father into a swan, which is how Leda was seduced.)

The question is important, because the Romanized version of their story set by Rameau has Pollux immortal and Castor not just mortal but gone the way of all flesh. Pollux goes to beg Castor's release from Hades, which is granted on the condition that Pollux take Castor's place. Pollux is willing, but Castor is so stricken with grief that he declares his intention to return after one day. Jupiter then takes pity and, from on high, invites them to "embellish these regions."

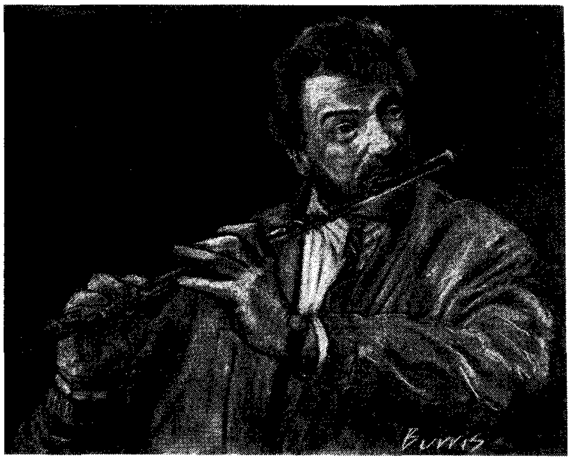
Rameau was a strange and cantankerous man who got his first chance at operatic success at the age of fifty, composed his best works in quick succession over the next decade, and lived twenty more years composing, revising, theorizing, engaging in polemics, and alienating his admirers. Almost all his French successors have recognized him as a giant. Any Rameau revival is an event. James Richman and his baroque ensemble, Concert Royal, earned good notices last season with "Hippolyte et Aricie"; we trust the stars will favor their presentation of "Castor et Pollux" on October 17 and 18.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Alice Tully Hall 362-1911; for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424; for Carnegie Hall 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

## OPERA

**Metropolitan Opera**—**DON GIOVANNI,** with Cheryl Studer, Roberta Alexander, Thomas Hampson, and Paul Plishka; conducted by James Levine. (Oct. 15 and Oct. 19 at 8.) . . . With Cheryl Studer, Karita Mattila, Thomas Hampson, and Paul Plishka; James Levine. (Oct. 24 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Sumi Jo, Jerry Hadley, and Bruno Pola; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Oct. 16 at 8.) . . . With Sumi Jo, Alfredo Kraus, and Bruno Pola; Guido Ajmone-Marsan. (Oct. 20 at 1 and Oct. 23 at 8.) . . . **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Felicity Lott, Anne Sofie von Otter, Barbara Bonney, Luciano Pavarotti, and Aage Haugland; Carlos Kleiber. (Oct. 17 and Oct. 20 at 7:30.) . . . **BORIS GODUNOV,** with Stefania Toczyska, Gary Lakes, Philip Langridge, Paata Burchuladze, and Sergei Koptchak; Emil Tchakarov. (Oct. 18 at 8.) . . . With Stefania Toczyska, Gary Lakes, Peter Kazaras, Nicolai Ghiaurov, and Sergei Koptchak; Emil Tchakarov (Oct. 22 at 8.)

**New York City Opera**—**A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC,** with Sally Ann Howes, Elaine Bonazzi, Michèle McBride, Harlan Foss, Michael Rees Davis, and Michael Maguire; conducted by Paul Gemignani. (Oct. 16 and Oct. 20 at 8.) . . . **LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST,** a revival of Puccini's pistol-packing spaghetti Western, with Linda Roark-Strummer, Stefano Algieri, and Louis Manikas; Arthur Fagen. (Oct. 17 at 8.) . . . With Martha Thigpen, Vincenzo Scuderi, and James Dietsch; Arthur Fagen. (Oct. 23 at 8.) . . . **MARTHA,** Friedrich von Flotow's 1847 confection of romantic subterfuge, was once an immensely popular operatic staple, but it has drifted into obscurity through the years. In this new production, it is updated to England in the nineteen-twenties. With Sheryl Woods, Lucille Beer, Martin Thompson, and Dean Peterson; Arthur Fagen. (Oct. 18 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 2.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Michèle Boucher, Linda Zoghby, Robert Brubaker, and Carlos Serrano; Joseph Colaneri. (Oct. 19 at 8.) . . . With Geraldine McMillian, Lauren Flanigan, Jianyi Zhang, and Peter Barcza; Joseph Colaneri (Oct. 24 at 8.) . . . **THE MIKADO,** with Lisa Saffer, Josepha Gayer, Richard McKee, Carroll Freeman, and James Billings; Chris Nance. (Oct. 20 at 2.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)



*James Galway with the Pittsburgh Symphony*

**Les Arts Florissants**—William Christie directs his Paris-based ensemble in concert presentations of Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas" and the group's namesake piece, Charpentier's "Les Arts Florissants." (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 15 at 8.)

**"Castor et Pollux"**—A concert performance of Jean-Philippe Rameau's *tragédie lyrique,* in the composer's streamlined version of 1754. James Richman directs the Concert Royal Baroque Orchestra and various vocal soloists. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 17-18 at 8.)

**"Tibetan Dreams"**—The première of a three-act opera composed by Stephen Dickman to a libretto by Gary Glickman. Constantine Kitsopoulos conducts three soloists and a chamber ensemble. (Cunningham Dance Studio, 463 West St. 533-9697. Oct. 20 at 8:30 and Oct. 21 at 8.)

## ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**New York Philharmonic**—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. Oct. 16 at 7:30: A program of William Schuman, Saint-Saëns, and Samuel Barber (his Piano Concerto, with soloist John Browning). . . . ¶ Oct. 18 and Oct. 20 at 8, Oct. 19 at 11 A.M., and Oct. 23 at 7:30: Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony and Beethoven's Violin Concerto, with concertmaster Glenn Dicterow as soloist.

**Symphony Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music**—A seventieth-birthday tribute to Isaac Stern. Otto-Werner Mueller conducts music by Haydn and Hindemith, as well as Beethoven's Violin Concerto, with Mr. Stern as soloist. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 16 at 7.)

**Pittsburgh Symphony**—Lorin Maazel conducting. "The 'Ring' Without Words" (Mr. Maazel's orchestral arrangement in which he reduces Wagner's tetralogy to a mere hour) and the New York première of Marc Neikrug's Flute Concerto, with James Galway. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 17 at 8.) . . . ¶ Tchaikovsky's "Polish" Symphony and Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, with Horacio Gutiérrez. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 20 at 8.)

**Boston Symphony**—At Carnegie Hall, Seiji Ozawa conducting. Oct. 17-18 at 8: Mahler's Fifth Symphony and, with Martha Argerich as soloist, Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto. . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 8: Brahms' First Symphony and the world première of Toru Takemitsu's "From me flows what you call Time," for percussion and orchestra, a work inspired by the highland migrations of Tibetan nomads. In this performance, the Canadian percussion quintet Nexus not only plays its usual assortment of drums, cymbals, and gongs but also activates a network of bells suspended above the audience by strings that are color-coded to represent sky, water, earth, fire, and wind.

**Czech Philharmonic Orchestra**—Jiří Bělohlávek conducts Smetana's nationalistic cycle, "Má Vlast." (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 21 at 3.)

**Juilliard Orchestra**—Otto-Werner Mueller directs Stravinsky's "Symphony of Psalms" and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, with the Westminster Symphonic Choir, and soloists including bass-baritone Simon Estes. (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

**Japan Philharmonic**—Kenichiro Kobayashi conducts Toru Takemitsu's "Requiem for Strings," Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, and Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto (with Ikuyo Nakamichi as soloist). (Avery Fisher Hall. Oct. 24 at 8.)

**Washington Cathedral Choir**—The men-and-boys choir of the recently completed cathedral, directed by organist-choirmaster Douglas Major, performs music by Tallis, Byrd, Herbert Howells, and others. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. Oct. 19 at 8.)

**New York Virtuoso Singers**—Harold Rosenbaum directs Renaissance and twentieth-century music. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Oct. 23 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 763-3453.)

**New York Concert Singers**—Judith Clurman conducts music by Fauré, Brahms, and Virgil Thomson, as well as recent works by Bruce MacCombie ("Color & Time") and Stephen Paulus ("Madrigali di Michelangelo"). (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 24 at 8.)

## RECITALS

**Vladimir Viardo**—In the first of three concerts exploring Russian keyboard music, the pianist plays Tchaikovsky's "Seasons" suite and three sonatas by Nicolai Medtner. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 15 at 8.)

**Capilla Virreinal de la Nueva España**—Mexican sacred music for voices and instruments from the sixteenth century through the eighteenth, directed by Aurelio Tello. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Oct. 15 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

**Omni Ensemble and Newband**—These two contemporary-music groups jointly undertake an avant-garde evening of works for such instruments as a zoomoozophone, a diamond marimba, a surrogate kithara, stroke rods, and a variety of synthesizers. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 16 at 8.)

**Tokyo String Quartet**—Augmented by Jaime Laredo (violin and viola) and Sharon Robinson (cello), performing music by Schubert, Bartók, Dvořák, and Robert Starer. (92nd Street Y. Oct. 16-17 at 8.)

**Bargemusic**—Assorted trios by Beethoven and Roussel. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 18 at 7:30 and Oct. 21 at 4.)

**Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center**—Canzonas for brass instruments and organ by Giovanni Gabrieli, music by Beethoven and Brahms, and the premières of works by Elliott Carter and Joseph Turrin. (Alice Tully Hall. Oct. 19 at 8 and Oct. 21 at 5.)

**Partita Chamber Ensemble**—Schubert's Octet, and quartets for odd combinations by Franz Anton Hoffmeister (for violin, viola, cello, and solo double bass) and Martinů (for clarinet, horn, cello, and drum). (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Oct. 19 at 8.)

**Raphael Trio**—Performing a weekend marathon of Haydn's fifteen late "London Trios," with five assigned to each installment. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Oct. 20 at 8:30, and Oct. 21 at 2 and 8:30.)

**Shura Cherkassky**—The pianist, who once gave a command performance at the White House for President Harding, plays a partita by Bach, impromptus by Schubert, a sonata by Prokofiev, and works by Rachmaninoff, Moszkowski, and Stockhausen. (92nd Street Y. Oct. 20 at 8.)

**Gérard Souzay**—Baritone, with pianist Dalton Baldwin, performs songs of Ravel and Duparc. (92nd Street Y. Oct. 21 at 3.)

**Midori**—Violin, performing music by Beethoven, Paganini, and others. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 21 at 3.)

**Festival of Contemporary Music from Italy**—A series of panel discussions and performances of twentieth-century Italian music, with an emphasis on recent trends. Concerts feature Turin's Arturo Toscanini Chamber Ensemble, soprano Victoria Schneider, pianist Massimiliano Damerini, and other soloists, conducted by Giuseppe Garbarino. (Equitable Center Auditorium, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. Oct. 21 at 3, and Oct. 23-24 at 8. No tickets necessary. For further information, call 595-8565.)

**Musicians of Swanne Alley**—An early-music sextet, including lutenist Paul O'Dette, performs late-Renaissance music from Italy and England. Presented by Music Before 1800. (Corpus Christi Church, W. 121st St., just east of Broadway. Oct. 21 at 4. For ticket information, call 666-0675.)

**Rosalyn Tureck**—Piano, plays Bach's "Goldberg Variations." (Temple Emanu-El, Fifth Ave. at 65th St. Oct. 21 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

**New York Festival of Song**—Baritone Kurt Ollmann, mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt, and pianist Michael Barrett perform lieder by Robert and Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, with a narrative from their letters and diaries. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Oct. 21 at 5.)

**Wallfisch Duo**—The British cello-and-piano (son-and-father) duo performs music by Beethoven, Schumann, Martinů, and others. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. Oct. 21 at 5.)

**Alexander Slobodyanik**—The Ukrainian pianist performs music by his late compatriot Borys Lyatoshynsky, the world première of Alfred Schnittke's "Five Aphorisms After Joseph Brodsky," Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition," and works by Mendelssohn, Chopin, Cage, and Prokofiev. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 21 at 8.)

**London Brass**—The ten-member group (formerly known as the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble) performs German baroque music, as well as more recent pieces by Elgar, Britten, Richard Rodney Bennett, and others. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 21 at 8.)

**Jessye Norman**—Soprano, with pianist Geoffrey Parsons, in a recital of songs by Brahms, Strauss, Berg, and Chausson. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

**New York New Music Ensemble**—Robert Black conducts the chamber group in recent works by Milton Babbitt, Peter Maxwell Davies, Dorrance Stalvey, Poul Ruders, and Bun-Ching Lam. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 22 at 8.)

**Essential Music**—A modernist retrospective, encompassing "Ursonata," a spoken sound-poem by the Dadaist painter Kurt Schwitters; Robert Ashley's "Morton Feldman Says," a staged re-creation of Mr. Ashley interviewing Mr. Feldman in 1964; and John Cage's "The City Wears a Slouch Hat," a 1942 "play" for percussion, old-time-radio sound effects, and actors. (RAPP Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 529-6160. Oct. 23 at 8.)

**Trio Bell'Arte**—Bert Lucarelli (oboe), Robert Stallman (flute), and Elaine Comparone (harpsichord) perform music from the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 24 at 8.)

**Walter Hilse**—Organ, performing music by Hindemith, Schumann, Bach, and Sowerby. (Park Avenue Christian Church, Park Ave. at 85th St. Oct. 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

## JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

**Bob Dylan**—Bob and the Zeitgeist haven't been keeping in close touch for a while. He's been touring virtually non-stop for three years now—this is his third or fourth show in New York—and giving alternately absent-minded and radiant performances, sometimes during the same show. The concerts have next to nothing to do with his recent recording incarnations. The drama in the live act depends on Dylan the trickster's ever-shifting approach to his overwhelming songbook. When he carries the retrospective weight lightly, this insular denizen of tour buses can still shine as our greatest troubadour. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 15-19 at 8.)

**Randy Travis**—According to his public-relations people, all Randy Travis wants is to "sing the best country songs available in the most sincere manner possible." The fact that these words remain believable even after Travis has rocketed to the glitzy pinnacle of show-business success is a cause for wonder. (His current tour began at the Country Music Association Awards and ends at Bally's Casino & Resort in Las Vegas—not exactly an itinerary for the congenitally sincere.) On his lovely new album of duets, "Heroes and Friends," he manages to provide a generous showcase for the talents of Merle Haggard, Dolly Parton, B. B. King, Roy Rogers, and Tammy Wynette, among others, and still to remain completely and satisfyingly himself on every track. In concert, Travis is equally modest and truehearted. All this and looks that give Tom Cruise a run for his money in the handsome department. With Ricky Van Shelton and Shenandoah. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Oct. 21 at 7:30.)

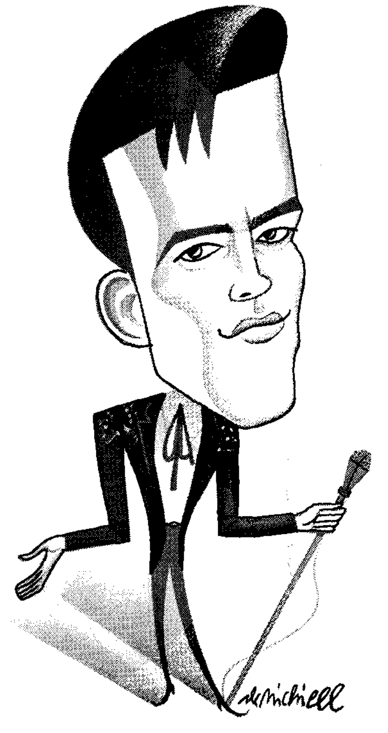
**Marianne Faithfull**—Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 17 at 8.

**Ruth Brown, Etta James, Koko Taylor, and Irma Thomas**—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Oct. 19 at 8.

**Royal New York Doo-Wopp Show**—The Chiffons, Speedo & the Cadillacs, the Flamingos, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 20 at 8.)

**"Jazzin' It Up with Snoopy"**—A fortieth-anniversary salute to "Peanuts," with Grover Washington, Jr., Ron Carter, Jack DeJohnette, Geri Allen, and others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Oct. 24 at 7.)

**Benefit Concerts**—Paul Simon, Southside Johnny & the Jukes, and the Hooters. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Oct. 20 at 8.) . . . ¶ Andrea Marcovicci. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Oct. 21 at 5. For information about tickets, call 879-4354.) . . . ¶ 10,000 Maniacs. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Oct. 23 at 8.)



*Randy Travis*

# SPORTS

## HOME TEAMS

**Jets**—Away until Nov. 4, when they face the Dallas Cowboys.

**Giants**—Vs. the Phoenix Cardinals, Oct. 21 at 4.

**Rangers**—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Oct. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Toronto Maple Leafs, Oct. 22. (Game time, 7:30.)

**Islanders**—Vs. the Winnipeg Jets, Oct. 16. . . . ¶ Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Oct. 20. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, Oct. 23. (Game time, 7:35.)

**Devils**—Vs. the Washington Capitals, Oct. 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Rangers, Oct. 19. (Game time, 7:45.)

(The Giants play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For information about tickets, call 1-201 935-8111. The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 422-9222; and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-6050.)

## RACING

**Horses**—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. Through Oct. 29. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.

## CHAMPIONSHIP—BASEBALL

**World Series**—Begins Oct. 16-17 with two games in Pittsburgh or Cincinnati. Continues Oct. 19-21 with three games in Oakland. If necessary, the Series concludes in the National League city Oct. 23-24.

# ABOVE AND BEYOND

**Trees Grow in Brooklyn**—The theme of this year's week-long exhibition of bonsai trees is "Working with Rocks." On Oct. 20, at 1:30, Marian Gillenswan, the former president of the Bonsai Society of Greater New York, will give a lecture called "Junipers on a Slab." On Oct. 21, at 1:30, David Andrews will follow up with "Pine on a Slab." On Oct. 28, starting at 1, there will be an auction of bonsai and, of course, rocks. (Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. Oct. 20-28. For more information, call 1-718 622-4433, ext. 351.)

**River View**—The Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation has installed an exhibit at the Urban Center to focus public attention on the Village's waterfront. The highlight of the show is a sixteen-foot-long wooden model of the waterfront, which shows points of architectural and historic interest, including where Alexander Hamilton died after his duel with Aaron Burr and where the Titanic survivors came ashore. (457 Madison Ave. at 51st St. Through Oct. 25.)

**Readings**—Oct. 17 at 8: Galway Kinnell and Mark Strand read from their own poetry. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 7: A Robert Penn Warren memorial reading, with John Burt, John Hollander, Mark Strand, and Rosanna Warren. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 8: David Leavitt reads from his new collection, "A Place I've Never Been." (Three Lives & Co., 154 W. 10th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 8: Nadine Gordimer reads from her new novel, "My Son's Story." (Endicott Booksellers, 450 Columbus Ave., at 81st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 8: Alice Adams, Harriet Doerr, and George Szanto read from their own prose. (Manhattan Theatre Club, [illegible] City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For information about tickets, call 645-0905.) . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 8: Josephine Jacobsen and Anne Winters read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.)

**Talks**—Oct. 18 at 6: Spalding Gray will give a preview of his new work, "Monster in a Box." (Juilliard School, 65th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam Ave. For information about tickets, call 877-1800, Ext. 633.) . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 7: Jim Whittaker will talk about his climb up Mount Everest. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.)

**Memorandum**—The Fall Antiques Show at Pier 92 (Twelfth Ave. at 52nd St.) will take place Oct. 18-20, from 11 to 9, and Oct. 21, from 11 to 6. A free shuttle bus will run continually from the Lincoln Center Museum Shop (61 W. 62nd St.) to the show and back.

# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE MOVIE HOUSES

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |  |  |  |

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 32.

### EAST SIDE

**Angelika Film Center,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: "To Sleep with Anger" (directed by Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "After Dark, My Sweet" (James Foley), with Jason Patric, Rachel Ward, and Bruce Dern. From Oct. 19: "Allegro Non Troppo" (1977, Bruno Bozzetto; in Italian), a six-episode animated and live-action film.

Theatre 3: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).

Theatre 4: "King of New York" (Abel Ferrara), with Christopher Walken.

Theatre 5: "Wild at Heart" (†).

Theatre 6: "The Tall Guy" (†).

**Public Theatre,** 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

"Landscape in the Mist" (Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek).

**Movieland 8th Street Triplex,** 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Miller's Crossing" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Miller's Crossing" (†). From Oct. 19: "Avalon" (†).

Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).

**Bijou Cinema,** 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)

"Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Loews 19th Street East 6,** B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Hot Spot" (Dennis Hopper), with Don Johnson, Virginia Madsen, Jennifer Connelly, and Charles Martin Smith.

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 18: "Ghost" (†). From Oct. 19: "Avalon" (†).

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 16: "King of New York" (Abel Ferrara), with Christopher Walken. From Oct. 17: "Reversal of Fortune" (Barbet Schroeder), with Glenn Close, Jeremy Irons, and Ron Silver.

Theatre 5: "Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

Theatre 6: Through Oct. 18: "Desperate Hours" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke, Anthony Hopkins, Mimi Rogers, Lindsay Crouse, and Kelly Lynch. From Oct. 19: "Quigley Down Under" (Simon Wincer), with Tom Selleck, Laura San Giacomo, and Alan Rickman.

**Gramercy,** Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Fantasia" (†).

**Bay Cinema,** 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Loews 34th Street Showplace,** 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "The Hot Spot" (Dennis Hopper), with Don Johnson.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Ghost" (†). From Oct. 19: "Quigley Down Under" (Simon Wincer), with Tom Selleck, Laura San Giacomo, and Alan Rickman.

Theatre 3: "Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

**34th St. East,** 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Pacific Heights" (†).

**Eastside Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Ghost" (†).

**Sutton I and 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Fantasia" (†).

Theatre 2: "Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.

**Gotham Cinema,** 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Pacific Heights" (†).

**Plaza,** 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"The Tall Guy" (†).

**Manhattan Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Marked for Death." From Oct. 19: "Night of the Living Dead" (Tom Savini).

**59th Street East Cinema,** 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

**Baronet and Coronet,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 18: "Henry & June" (†). From Oct. 19: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Theatre 2: "Miller's Crossing" (†).

**Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue,** 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).

*Maria de Medeiros and Uma Thurman in "Henry & June"*

Theatre 2: "Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones" (Ellen Weissbrod), a documentary.

Theatre 3: "To Sleep with Anger" (Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover.

**Gemini I and 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Avalon" (†).

Theatre 2: "Avalon" (†).

**Beekman,** 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Loews New York Twin,** 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "The Hot Spot" (Dennis Hopper), with Don Johnson, Virginia Madsen, Jennifer Connelly, and Charles Martin Smith.

Theatre 2: "Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.

**68th St. Playhouse,** 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through Oct. 16: "White Hunter, Black Heart" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, George Dzundza, and Alun Armstrong.

From Oct. 17: "Reversal of Fortune" (Barbet Schroeder), with Glenn Close, Jeremy Irons, and Ron Silver.

**Loews Tower East,** 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

Through Oct. 18: "Desperate Hours" (Michael Cimino), with Mickey Rourke.

From Oct. 19: "Quigley Down Under" (Simon Wincer), with Tom Selleck, Laura San Giacomo, and Alan Rickman.

**U. A. East,** 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

**Park & 86th Street Cinemas,** 125 E. 86th. (534-1800)

Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal, Joanna Pacula, and Keith David.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Marked for Death." From Oct. 19: "Night of the Living Dead" (Tom Savini).

**86th Street East Twin,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).

Theatre 2: "Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.

### WEST SIDE

**Film Forum,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 23: "Bakayaro! I'm Plenty Mad" (1988, in Japanese), four episodes by four directors. From Oct. 24: "Tong Tana: A Journey to the Heart of Borneo" (directed by Jan Roed, Fredrik Von Krusenstjerna, Bjorn Cederberg, and Kristian Petri; in German, English, Swedish, and Penan), a documentary.

Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.

Theatre 3: Through Oct. 16: "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948, Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, Edgar Kennedy, and Rudy Vallée: and "The Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend" (1949, Sturges), with Betty Grable, Vallée, Cesar Romero, and Porter Hall. . . . ¶ Oct. 17-18: "Easy Living" (1937, Mitchell Leisen), with Jean Arthur, Edward Arnold, and Ray Milland; and "The Power and the Glory" (1933, William K. Howard), with Spencer Tracy and Colleen Moore. . . . ¶ From Oct. 19: "Akira" (Katsuhiro Otomo), a Japanese animated science-fiction film.

**Waverly I and 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 18: "Pacific Heights" (†). From Oct. 19: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Theatre 2: "Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

**8th St. Playhouse,** 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)

"Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.

**Art Greenwich Twin,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).

Theatre 2: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Quad Cinema,** 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through Oct. 18: "Presumed Innocent" (†). From Oct. 19: "The Kill-Off" (Maggie Greenwald).

Theatre 2: "Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.

Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).

Theatre 4: "State of Grace" (†).

**Chelsea Cinemas,** 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)

Theatre 1: "Pacific Heights" (†).

Theatre 2: "Henry & June" (†).

Theatre 3: "Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones" (Ellen Weissbrod), a documentary.

Theatre 4: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

Theatre 5: "Miller's Crossing" (†).

Theatre 6: Through Oct. 18: "Postcards from the Edge" (†). From Oct. 19: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

Theatre 7: "Pacific Heights" (†).

Theatre 8: "Miller's Crossing" (†).

Theatre 9: "Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.

**23rd St. West Triplex,** 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Marked for Death." From Oct. 19: "Night of the Living Dead" (Tom Savini).

Theatre 3: "Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.

**Guild,** 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Fantasia" (†).

**Worldwide Cinemas,** 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "Henry & June" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Tall Guy" (†).

Theatre 3: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal.

Theatre 4: Through Oct. 18: "Texasville" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd, and Annie Potts. From Oct. 19: "Avalon" (†).

Theatre 5: "Pump Up the Volume" (Allan Moyle), with Christian Slater.

Theatre 6: "I Come in Peace" (Craig R. Baxley), with Dolph Lundgren.

**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Postcards from the Edge" (†).

**Loews Festival,** 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Ghost" (†).

**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

Through Oct. 16: "Akira Kurosawa's Dreams" (†).

From Oct. 17: "Reversal of Fortune" (Barbet Schroeder), with Glenn Close, Jeremy Irons, and Ron Silver.

**Carnegie Hall Cinema,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th, (265-2520)

"Miller's Crossing" (†).

**Carnegie Screening Room,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

"Miller's Crossing" (†).

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–David Kearns, Chairman of Xerox Corporation

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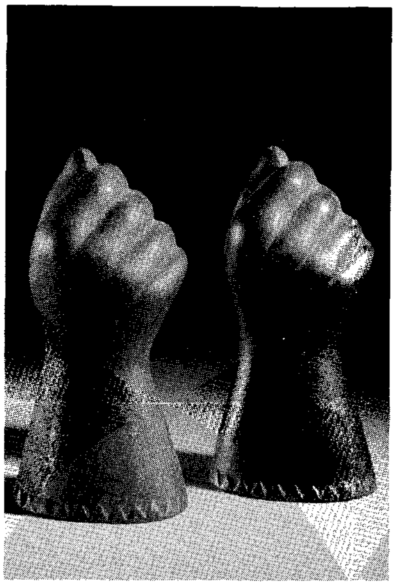

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## MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

**Loews Fine Arts,** 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman).

**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Presumed Innocent" (†).

**Loews Paramount,** B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Oct. 18: "Ghost" (†).
From Oct. 19: "Quigley Down Under" (Simon Wincer), with Tom Selleck, Laura San Giacomo, and Alan Rickman.

**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Pacific Heights" (†).

**Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3,** B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Icicle Thief" (Maurizio Nichetti; in Italian), with Nichetti.
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian).
Theatre 3: Through Oct. 18: "Life and Nothing But" (Bertrand Tavernier; in French), with Phillippe Noiret, Sabine Azema, and Pascale Vignal. From Oct. 19: "L'Atalante" (1934, Jean Vigo; in French), with Michel Simon, Dita Parlo, and Jean Dasté.

**Regency,** B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Oct. 18: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).
From Oct. 19: "White Palace" (Luis Mandoki), with Susan Sarandon and James Spader.

**Loews 84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "The Hot Spot" (Dennis Hopper), with Don Johnson.
Theatre 2: "Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.
Theatre 3: "Fantasia" (†).
Theatre 4: "Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Oct. 18: "Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones" (Ellen Weissbrod), a documentary. From Oct. 19: "Avalon" (†).

**Metro Cinema 1 and 2,** B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.
Theatre 2: "King of New York" (Abel Ferrara), with Christopher Walken.

**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal, Joanna Pacula, and Keith David.
Theatre 2: "Marked for Death."

## TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mo' Better Blues" (†).
Theatre 3: "Narrow Margin" (directed by Peter Hyams), with Gene Hackman and Anne Archer.
Theatre 4: "To Sleep with Anger" (Charles Burnett), with Danny Glover.
Theatre 5: "Presumed Innocent" (†).
Theatre 6: "Pacific Heights" (†).

**Embassy 1,** B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Mr. Destiny" (James Orr), with James Belushi and Michael Caine.

**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Hot Spot" (Dennis Hopper), with Don Johnson, Virginia Madsen, Jennifer Connelly, and Charles Martin Smith.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Death Warrant" (Deran Sarafian), with Jean-Claude Van Damme. From Oct. 19: "Ghost" (†).
Theatre 3: "Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael" (Jim Abrahams), with Winona Ryder and Jeff Daniels.

**Loews Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"King of New York" (Abel Ferrara), with Christopher Walken.

**National Twin,** B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Marked for Death" (Dwight H. Little), with Steven Seagal, Joanna Pacula, and Keith David.
Theatre 2: Through Oct. 18: "Marked for Death." From Oct. 19: "Night of the Living Dead" (Tom Savini).

**West Side Cinema 1 and 2,** 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "White Hunter, Black Heart" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood, Jeff Fahey, George Dzundza, and Alun Armstrong.
Theatre 2: "Memphis Belle" (Michael Caton-Jones), with Matthew Modine and Eric Stoltz.

## REVIVAL HOUSES

**Biograph Cinema,** 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through Oct. 20: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944, directed by Vincente Minnelli), with Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Tom Drake, Leon Ames, Mary Astor, and Lucille Bremer; and "The Wizard of Oz" (1939, Victor Fleming), with Garland, Bert Lahr, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, and Jack Haley.
Oct. 21-24: "Rebecca" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joan Fontaine, Laurence Olivier, Judith Anderson, George Sanders, and Florence Bates; and "The Lion Has Wings" (1940, Michael Powell, Brian Desmond Hurst, and Adrian Brunel), a semi-documentary film, with Merle Oberon, Ralph Richardson, and Flora Robson.

**Film Forum 2,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Oct. 15: "Imitation of Life" (1934, Joh[illegible] Stahl), with Claudette Colbert, Louise Beavers, Rochelle Hudson, and Fredi Washington; and "Next Time We Love" (1936, Edward H. Griffith), with Margaret Sullavan and James Stewart.
Oct. 16: "I'll Be Yours" (1947, William A. Seiter), with Deanna Durbin, William Bendix, Adolphe Menjou, and Franklin Pangborn; and "I Married a Witch" (1942, René Clair), with Veronica Lake and Fredric March.
Oct. 17-18: "Easy Living" (1937, Mitchell Leisen), with Jean Arthur, Edward Arnold, and Ray Milland; and "New York Town" (1941, Charles Vidor), with Mary Martin, Robert Preston, Fred MacMurray, and Akim Tamiroff.
From Oct. 19: "Akira" (1989, Katsuhiro Otomo), a Japanese animated science-fiction film.

**Theatre 80 St. Marks,** 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Oct. 15: "The Little Theatre of Jean Renoir" (1969, Renoir; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Françoise Arnoul, and Fernand Sardou; and "French Cancan" (1954, Renoir; in French), with Jean Gabin, Maria Felix, and Edith Piaf.
Oct. 16: "Touch of Evil" (1958, Orson Welles), with Welles, Charlton Heston, and Janet Leigh; and "Shadow of a Doubt" (1942, Alfred Hitchcock), with Teresa Wright, Joseph Cotten, Patricia Collinge, Hume Cronyn, and Henry Travers.
Oct. 17: "Little Women" (1933, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Joan Bennett, Edna May Oliver, Frances Dee, and Spring Byington; and "Pride and Prejudice" (1940, Robert Z. Leonard), with Greer Garson and Laurence Olivier.
Oct. 18: "Whirlpool" (1950, Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, José Ferrer, and Richard Conte; and "Where the Sidewalk Ends" (1950, Preminger), with Tierney, Dana Andrews, and Gary Merrill.
Oct. 19-20: "The Philadelphia Story" (†); and "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, Howard Hawks), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Charles Ruggles.
Oct. 21: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Victor Sjöström, Ingrid Thulin, and Gunnar Björnstrand; and "Shame" (†).
Oct. 22: "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (1953, Max Ophuls; in French), with Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux, and Vittorio De Sica; and "Le Plaisir" (†).
Oct. 23: "Dark Passage" (1937, Delmer Daves), with Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, and Agnes Moorehead; and "To Have and Have Not" (†).
Oct. 24: "Twelve Angry Men" (1957, Sidney Lumet), with Henry Fonda, Lee J. Co[illegible] and Jack Warden; and "Witness for the Prosecution" (†).

## FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Oct. 15 at 2:30: "Parade of the Planets" (1984, directed by Vadim Abdrashitov). . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 6: "The Servant" (1989, Vadim Abdrashitov). Mr. Abdrashitov and the screenwriter, Alexander Mindadze, will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 15 at 6:30: "Hearing Voices" (1989, Sharon Greytak). . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 2:30: "The Servant." . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 6: "Parade of the Planets." . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 3 and 6: "Susumu" (1990, Gei Zantzinger) and "Samsara: Death and Rebirth in Cambodia" (1989, Ellen Bruno). . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 2:30: "Stark Love" (1927, Karl Brown; silent),

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## MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

with Helen Munday, Forrest James, and Silas Miracle. . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 6: “The Covered Wagon” (1923, James Cruze; silent), with J. Warren Kerrigan, Lois Wilson, and Alan Hale. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 2 and 5: “Shadows of Our Forgotten Ancestors” (1964, Sergei Paradjanov; in Ukrainian). . . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 2 and 5: “The Lady Vanishes” (†). . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 2:30 and 6: “The Late Matthew Pascal” (1925, Marcel L'Herbier; silent), with Lois Moran. . . . ¶ Oct. 22 at 6:30: “Begotten” (1989, Elias Merhige, who will be present).

**Museum of Broadcasting,** 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—“MB Playhouse,” dramas shown on television over the past thirty years. Oct. 16-20: Robert Alan Arthur's “A Man Is Ten Feet Tall” (1956, NBC), with Sidney Poitier; and Henry F. Greenberg's “People Need People” (1961, ABC), with Lee Marvin . . . ¶ From Oct. 23: Paddy Chayefsky's “Marty” (1953, NBC), with Rod Steiger and Nancy Marchand. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6, Wednesdays through Fridays at 3, and Saturdays at 1.

**Anthology Film Archives,** 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Courthouse Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. Oct. 15-17 at 7, Oct. 18 at 9, Oct. 19-20 at 9 and 10:30, Oct. 21 at 5 and 9, and Oct. 22-24 at 7: “The Prisoner of St. Petersburg” (1988, Ian Pringle). . . . ¶ Oct. 17 at 7: “Olympia” (1938, Leni Riefenstahl). . . . ¶ Oct. 18-21 at 7: Four videos by Burt Barr—“The Woman Next Door” (1984), “Ice” (1987), “The Dogs” (1989), and “Aeros” (1990). . . . ¶ Oct. 18 and 20 at 7 and Oct. 21 at 9: “Bury Me an Angel” (1972, Barbara Peters), with Dixie Peabody and Dan Haggerty. . . . ¶ Oct. 18-19 at 9 and Oct. 20 at 10:30: “Naked Angels” (1969, Bruce Clark). . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 7, Oct. 20 at 9, and Oct. 21 at 7: “Darktown Strutters” (1974, William Witney), with Trina Parks, Roger Mosley, and Dick Miller. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 7: “Francesco, Guillare di Dio” (1949, Roberto Rossellini; in Italian). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 9: A program of films by Paul Sharits.

**Donnell Library Center,** 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Oct. 16 at noon: “Moby Dick” (1956, John Huston), with Gregory Peck and Richard Basehart. . . . ¶ Oct. 16 at 2:30: “Cat People” (1942, Jacques Tourneur), with Simone Simon, Kent Smith, and Tom Conway. . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at noon: “Ingmar Bergman” (1971, Stig Björkman) and “Bertolucci Shoots ‘1900’ ” (1975, Gianni Amelio), both documentaries. . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 5:30: “Azul” (1988, Roland Legiardi-Laura). . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at noon: “The Misfits” (1960, John Huston), with Clark Gable, Marilyn Monroe, and Montgomery Clift. . . . ¶ Oct. 23 at 2:30: “King Kong” (†).

**Florence Gould Hall,** 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Oct. 17 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: “Jofroi” (1933, Marcel Pagnol; in French), with Henri Poupon, Vincent Scotto, Annie Toinon, and Charles Blavette; and “A Day in the Country” (1936, Jean Renoir; in French), with Sylvia Bataille and Jane Marken. . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: “Story of Women” (1988, Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert, François Cluzet, Marie Trintignant, and Nils Tavernier.

**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—“From Harlem to Hollywood: American Race Movies, 1912-48.” Oct. 17 at 2: “Hallelujah” (1929, King Vidor), with Daniel Haynes and Nina Mae McKinney. . . . ¶ Oct. 18 at 2: “Green Pastures” (1936, William Keighley and Marc Connelly), with Rex Ingram, Oscar Polk, and Eddie Anderson. . . . ¶ Oct. 19 at 2: “Blood of Jesus” (1941, Spencer Williams), with Williams. . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 2: A program of jazz performances on film, including Bessie Smith and Jimmy Mordecai in “St. Louis Blues.” . . . ¶ Oct. 20 at 4: “Basin Street Revue” (1951, Joseph Kohn), a made-for-TV concert film. . . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 2: “Swing” (1936, Oscar Micheaux), with Cora Green. . . . ¶ Oct. 21 at 4: “Murder in Harlem” (1939, Oscar Micheaux). . . . ¶ Oct. 24 at 2: “Basin Street Revue.”

**Japan Society,** 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015)—Oct. 19 at 6:30: “Senso Daughters” (1989, Noriko Sekiguchi; in Japanese).

**Jewish Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. (860-1894)—Oct. 23 at 7: “Marjorie Morningstar” (1958, Irving Rapper), with Gene Kelly and Natalie Wood.

**Whitney Museum,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—“Out of the Corner,” a video installation by Adrian Piper. Closed Mondays.

## IN BRIEF

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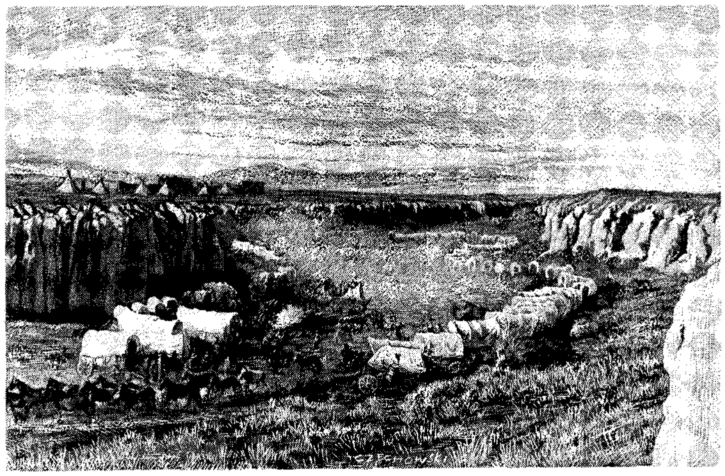
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

**Akira Kurosawa's Dreams**—Not one of its eight segments feels like a real dream. The kind of power that Kurosawa aims for, and intermittently achieves, in this picture is less oneiric than ceremonial. The film is a succession of sweeping dramatic gestures and lofty incantations performed in an atmosphere of hushed solemnity. The second half of “Dreams” is weak: the fifth episode, “Crows,” about a fantasy encounter with van Gogh, is a thin conceit; and the remaining three segments are all static, self-conscious, and didactic. But there's greatness in the film's first hour. The opening segment, “Sunshine Through the Rain,” is the vision of a small child who wanders into a forest and witnesses a wedding procession of foxes; the sequence has a wholly original sense of the rapturous fear and awe we feel when we first come upon the wonders of the natural world. The second episode, “The Peach Orchard,” is also lovely (though its mood and pace are too similar to those of the first). The third segment, “The Blizzard,” about four men trapped in a snowstorm, is all snow, howling-wind effects, and bleak, undifferentiated vistas of despair, until Kurosawa pulls a miracle out of the white void: a woman in long black hair and diaphanous robes appears to the party's leader as he battles sleep. It's a transcendent image, perhaps the most piercing ever made of the desires that keep people from surrendering to death. And the fourth episode, “The Tunnel,” about a man returning from war and encountering his dead comrades, is a brilliant, hypnotic piece of filmmaking. With Akira Terao, who plays the dreamer in six of the segments. In Japanese. —T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/10/90.) (Angelika Film Center. . . . ¶ 57th St. Playhouse; through Oct. 16.)

**Avalon**—With Armin Mueller-Stahl, Elizabeth Perkins, Joan Plowright, Aidan Quinn, and Elijah Wood; directed by Barry Levinson. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Gemini. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Worldwide Cinemas, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex; starting Oct. 19.)



*At MOMA, “The Covered Wagon”*

**Fantasia** (1940)—Disney enlisted an odd assortment of collaborators (among them Stokowski, who did it voluntarily, and Stravinsky, who was brought in involuntarily), and this grab bag of ambitious animated shorts—an attempt to combine high art and mass culture—was publicized as if it were an artistic landmark. Disney's animators provided visual interpretations of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (in Stokowski's transcription, which is a precursor of the musical processing in “2001”) and of hyped-up excerpts from the “Nutcracker” Suite, “The Sorcerer's Apprentice,” “The Rite of Spring,” the “Pastoral Symphony,” “The Dance of the Hours,” and “A Night on Bald Mountain” (which somehow leads into the “Ave Maria”). Volcanoes erupt and dinosaurs battle during “The Rite of Spring”; garlanded girl centaurs cavort during Beethoven's “Pastoral.” Initially, the film was a box-office failure, but it proved successful in revivals, especially in the early seventies, when it became a popular head film, because of such ingredients as the abstract first section, the mushroom dance during the “Nutcracker” (one of the liveliest sequences), and the overly bright—somewhat psychedelic—color. “The Sorcerer's Apprentice,” featuring Mickey Mouse, and parts of other sequences are first-rate Disney, but the total effect is grotesquely kitschy. —P.K. (Gramercy, Sutton, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

**Ghost**—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays on screen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over, with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of “It's a Wonderful Life” and some of the goofier, more solemn episodes of “The Twilight Zone,” and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Eastside Cinema and Loews Festival. . . . ¶ Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, and Loews Paramount; through Oct. 18. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Oct. 19.)

**GoodFellas**—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. His mobsters are high on having a wad of cash in their pockets. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book “Wiseguy,” it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of

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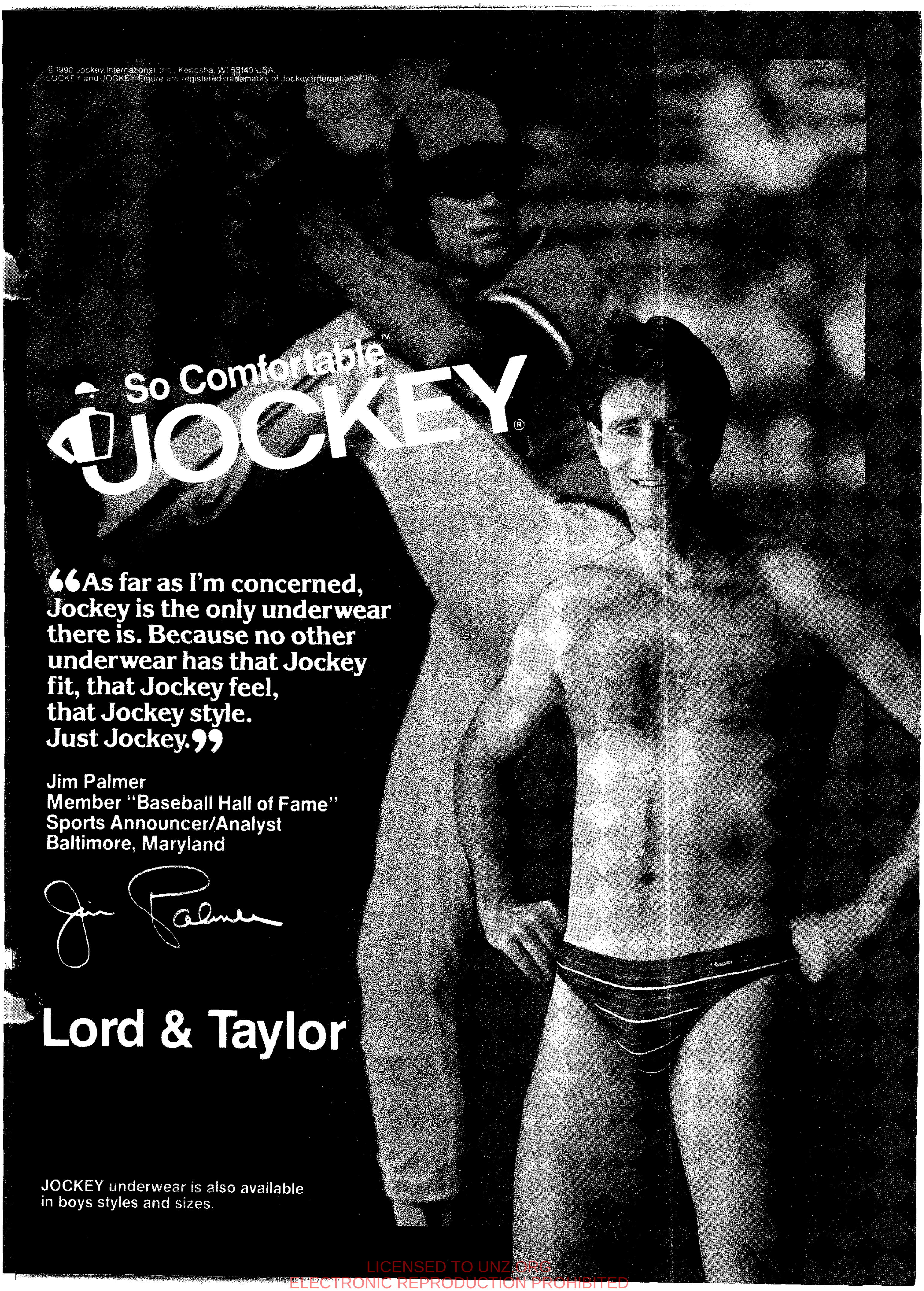

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HUMOR: GARRISON KEILLOR AND IAN FRAZIER

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drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and Tony Darrow as a restaurant owner, Welker White as a drug courier who needs her lucky hat to make a coke delivery, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

**Henry & June**—Philip Kaufman's wonderful new film shows us the writers Henry Miller (Fred Ward) and Anaïs Nin (Maria de Medeiros) in the first year of their acquaintance, the period of their brief, intense love affair. It's the love story of two people who are making themselves, and each other, up as they go along: Miller and Nin are at once real people and the products of their own imaginations—collaborators in a matched pair of literary myths. And the action unfolds in and around a city that seems both itself and a figment of itself: the Paris of the thirties. Kaufman brings out the bizarre, almost monstrous comedy of this odd literary/sexual love affair; he presents it as a kind of parody image of relationships between men and women. The third major character, Miller's wife, June (Uma Thurman), is the most mysterious presence here. She seems to represent a demonic, annihilating sexual force, but by the end she's almost a tragic figure; Miller and Nin have given each other the strength to write her out of their lives, in the most literal sense. The actors are splendid: Kaufman gets miraculously intelligent performances from Ward and de Medeiros, and Thurman—uninhibited yet also weirdly delicate—gives the picture a jolt every time she appears. (It's as if a character from a Strindberg chamber drama had barged into "Design for Living.") The movie creates a world, and Kaufman is both affectionate toward and clear-eyed about the people who live in it: he's concerned more with *enjoying* his characters, in all their contradictions, than with explaining them. The material plays as rich, dark erotic farce—a comedy about the duplicity of writers. Also with Richard E. Grant (as Nin's husband). The screenplay by Kaufman and his wife, Rose, is based on Nin's diary. Superb cinematography by Philippe Rousselot. —T.R. (10/8/90) (Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Baronet; through Oct. 18.)

**The Lady Vanishes** (1938)—Alfred Hitchcock's murder mystery about a fussy, jolly old lady who boards a train and disappears on it is directed with such skill and velocity that it has come to represent the quintessence of screen suspense. It provides some of the finest examples of Hitchcock touches—little shocks and perversities of editing and detail. The hero is played by a tall, callow young man making his first major film appearance—Michael Redgrave; the heroine is Margaret Lockwood, and the lady is Dame May Whitty. With Paul Lukas, Cecil Parker, Margaretta Scott, Catherine Lacey, Mary Clare, Linden Travers, Googie Withers, and the team of Naunton Wayne and Basil Radford doing a parody of the "jolly-good-show" type of Britisher. Screenplay by Sidney Gilliat, Frank Launder, and Alma Reville, based on the novel "The Wheel Spins" by Ethel Lina White.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Oct. 21.)

**Miller's Crossing**—A cold, clever period gangster movie by the Coen brothers. (Ethan produces and Joel directs, from a script they've written together.) Essentially, it's an academic exercise, a pastiche of the intricately plotted, morally ambiguous crime fiction of Dashiell Hammett: the screenplay incorporates large chunks of "Red Harvest" and "The Glass Key," with a notion or two from "The Maltese Falcon" thrown in. The Coens have certainly done their homework: their movie is a brilliant reading of Hammett. But that's all it is. The picture seems to have no life of its own, and the Coens' formal control and meticulously crafted ironies become, after a while, rather depressing. This is not so much a gangster movie as an extended, elaborate allusion to one. With Gabriel Byrne, Marcia Gay Harden, John Turturro, Jon Polito, J. E. Freeman, and Albert Finney (who is, by a long shot, the most entertaining performer in the movie). The cinematography, by Barry Sonnenfeld, is handsome, but in a studied and not very expressive way.—T.R. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Coronet, Chelsea Cinemas, Carnegie Hall Cinema, and Carnegie Screening Room.)

*The 1933 "King Kong" (playing October 23 at the Donnell Library Center) isn't about life imitating art; it's about life imitating a movie project. It's got two epic antiheroes: the mythic dinosaur-size ape and the famous jungle-film director, played by Robert Armstrong (patterned after Frank Buck). At the beginning, Armstrong complains that pundits say his movies would have more draw if they contained some romance. So he scours the New York City soup lines for a woman needy enough to join his biggest and most mysterious adventure —a secret journey to Skull Island in search of the fabled King Kong. He recruits Fay Wray after he sees her lifting an apple from a sidewalk stand. Even before he knows that Kong lusts for human female flesh, he test-screams Wray and photographs her modelling a "Beauty and the Beast" costume.*

*"King Kong" is the story of the luckiest director who ever lived. Wray turns out to be a plucky leading lady with a powerful set of lungs, and Kong is, if anything, overly coöperative in filling out Armstrong's love story—especially in the restored prints that are now circulating, in which Kong gently strips Wray's clothing. But like any huge star, the ape is uncontrollable—especially, again, in the restored version, where he viciously tromps and chomps his victims in closeup.*

*Armstrong starts out making a film-within-the-film—he talks of having to shoot before monsoon season, he lugs a camera along with his rifles and gas bombs. Then he turns Kong into a one-ape Broadway spectacle. Armstrong's showmanship helps give the movie's horrifying adventures their harum-scarum zest. This "King Kong" is both gorgeous and brutal. Fortunately, the show-biz frame cushions the bone crushing. You see the action through Armstrong's let's-put-on-a-show eyes, and it becomes a grand excursion into impure movie magic.*

**Mo' Better Blues**—The hero of Spike Lee's film is a trumpet player named Bleek Gilliam (Denzel Washington), who is squarely in the tradition of obsessive, single-minded movie jazz musicians. Lee's script presents Bleek with a series of choices, about his love life, his artistic life, and the connections between them. The problem with the picture is that it doesn't frame the hero's choices so that we know what's at stake. And Lee doesn't seem to have thought through the role of the music. He has set the film in the present—in pointed contrast with other recent movies about jazz—but his attitude toward the

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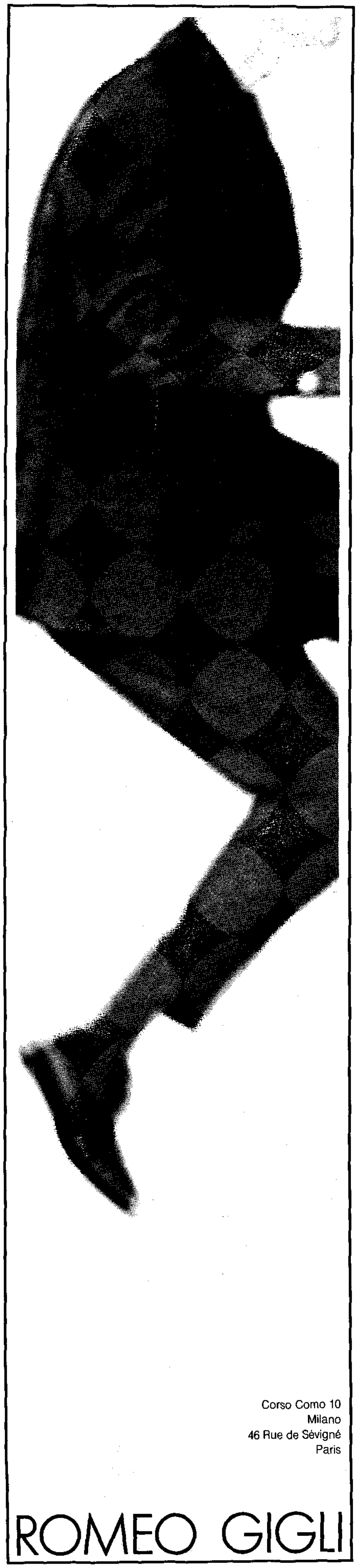
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ROMEO GIGLI

## IN BRIEF—Cont'd

music's relationship to contemporary culture is incoherent. The picture has a distracted, meandering quality. Denzel Washington's magnetism and intelligence keep the movie watchable even during its most aimless stretches, but the script doesn't allow him to shape the performance. Lee's filmmaking here is all notions and no shape: hard, fierce blowing, rather than real music. Also with Wesley Snipes, Joie Lee, Cynda Williams, Giancarlo Esposito, Dick Anthony Williams, John and Nicholas Turturro, and the late Robin Harris. Lee himself plays a comic lovable-sidekick role. The score is by Bill Lee (the director's father), and the music of Bleek's quintet is played by the Branford Marsalis Quintet, with Terence Blanchard as the trumpet soloist.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Criterion Center.)

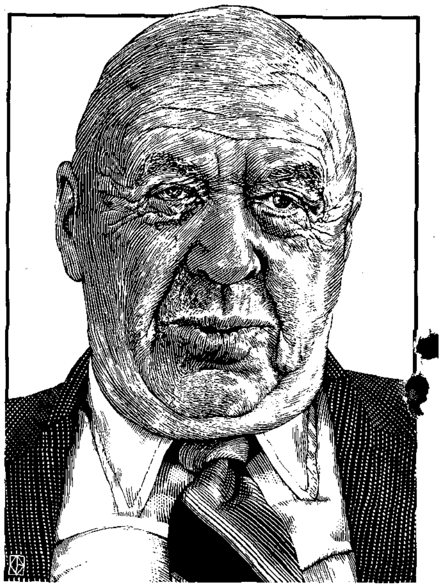
**Pacific Heights**—With Melanie Griffith, Matthew Modine, and Michael Keaton; directed by John Schlesinger. (Reviewed in this issue.) (34th St. East, Gotham Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Waverly; through Oct. 18.)

**The Philadelphia Story** (1940)—Philip Barry wrote this romantic comedy for Katharine Hepburn, shaping it for her tense patrician beauty and her eccentricities, and she had her greatest popular triumph in it on Broadway (in 1939) and on the screen. There's conventional Broadway shoddiness at its center: the material plays off Hepburn's public personality, pulling her down from her pedestal. As Tracy Lord, a snow maiden and a phony—which is how the movie public regarded Hepburn, according to the exhibitors who in 1938 had declared her "box-office poison"—she gets her comeuppance. The priggish, snooty Tracy is contemptuous of everyone who doesn't live up to her high standards (and that includes her father, played by John Halliday, and her ex-husband, played by Cary Grant); in the course of the action, she slips from those standards herself, learns to be tolerant of other people's lapses, and discovers her own "humanity." Shiny and unfelt and smart-aleck-commercial as the movie is, it's almost irresistibly entertaining—one of the high spots of M-G-M professionalism. There isn't much real wit in the lines, and there's no feeling of spontaneity, yet the engineering is so astute that the laughs keep coming. This is a paste diamond with more flash and sparkle than a true one. The director, George Cukor, has never been more heartlessly sure of himself. With James Stewart, who took the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance as the journalist who has a sudden romantic fling with Tracy, and Ruth Hussey, John Howard, Roland Young, Henry Daniell, and Virginia Weidler. The additions by the adapter, Donald Ogden Stewart, are brief and witty; Hepburn's gowns are by Adrian. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 19-20.)

**Le Plaisir** (1952)—This Max Ophuls omnibus film, based on three Maupassant stories, sounds better than it is; the stories allow Ophuls to display his virtuoso technique, but two of the three turn out too thin and hokey. The first, "The Mask," famous for the Palais de la Danse sequence, is about a man trying to retain the illusion of youth; Gaby Morlay and Claude Dauphin are in it. "The Model" is about an artist (Daniel Gélin) who quarrels with his mistress-model (Simone Simon). The most satisfying, "The House of Madame Tellier," is about the temporary closing of a brothel when the madam (Madeline Renaud) and her girls go to the country to attend the first Communion of the madam's niece. The cast includes Jean Gabin, Danielle Darrieux, Pierre Brasseur, Ginette Leclerc, Mila Parély, and Louis Seigner. In French.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 22.)

**Postcards from the Edge**—With Meryl Streep, Shirley MacLaine, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, and Richard Dreyfuss. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bijou Cinema, Bay Cinema, Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Regency; through Oct. 18.)

**Presumed Innocent**—A ponderous adaptation of Scott Turow's cunningly plotted mystery novel. The director, Alan J. Pakula, has shot and paced the movie as if it weren't a mystery but a serious character study, an art film. It's lit (by Gordon Willis) like "Cries and Whispers," only without the bright-red accents: the movie's palette seems to consist of brown and gray—earnest, business-suit colors. The lunacy of treating this story as a deep exploration of character is that the only thing we really want to know about the character in question—Rusty Sabich (Harrison Ford), a Midwestern prosecutor accused of murdering one of his colleagues (Greta Scacchi)—is: Did he do it or not? Ford, in what is probably an unplayable role, has to maintain a tense, repressed, impenetrable expression throughout. Bonnie Bedelia, as Rusty's nervous, self-deprecating wife, gives lovely shadings to a tough part. As the judge presiding over Rusty's trial, Paul Winfield supplies some sorely needed comedy. And Raul Julia, as the hero's lawyer, is an elegant, commanding presence in the courtroom scenes. Also with Brian Dennehy. Screenplay by Pakula and Frank Pierson.—T.R. (8/13/90) (Cinema 3, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through Oct. 18.)



*An Otto Preminger double bill at Theatre 80 St. Marks*

**Shame** (1968)—Ingmar Bergman's simple, masterly vision of normal war and what it does to survivors. Set a tiny step into the future, the film has the inevitability of a common dream. Liv Ullmann is superb in the demanding central role—one that calls for emotional involvements with her husband (Max von Sydow) and her lover (Gunnar Björnstrand). One of Bergman's greatest films, this is one of the least known. Cinematography by Sven Nykvist. In Swedish.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 21.)

**State of Grace**—A violent, fairly exciting contemporary gangster movie. What's unusual about the picture is that the thugs are mostly Irish; they're based, loosely, on the Hell's Kitchen gang known as the Westies. The novelty of the characters' ethnicity wears off quickly, because everything else in the movie is secondhand. The relationship between the sensitive, conflicted hero (Sean Penn) and his volatile best friend (Gary Oldman) is hijacked—shamelessly, in broad daylight—from "Mean Streets." The screenplay, by Dennis McIntire, leans heavily on the most familiar Hollywood suspense devices. And Phil Joanou directs as if he were compiling an anthology of action-movie styles from the past two decades of American filmmaking. (He quotes Peckinpah, Coppola, De Palma, and Walter Hill, as well as Scorsese.) The film is never convincing, but it's watchable: it moves, and the performances, by Oldman, Ed Harris, and (especially) Penn are strong. Also with John Turturro and Robin Wright. —T.R. (Quad Cinema.)

**The Tall Guy**—Jeff Goldblum as an American actor in London who has spent six years playing stooge to a detestably smug English comic (Rowan Atkinson) and has lost his confidence and most of his sex drive. Then this gangling wreck is cast as the lead in an Andrew Lloyd Webber-style version of "The Elephant Man"—"Elephant!" the musical. Directed by Mel Smith, from a script by Richard Curtis, this satire of the life of the theatre has a loose, inventive dottiness. Goldblum's wild-eyed sloppy good nature sets off Atkinson's lethal genius at playng an articulate swine, and the whole cast appears to be acting in clover. That includes Emma Thompson, who seems stripped down to pure flakiness, and Geraldine James as a nympho landlady, Hugh Thomas as a diphead doctor, Anna Massey as a gleaming smart agent, Kim Thomson as a curly-haired singer, and the insidious Peter Kelly as the smarmy mountebank who stages "Elephant!" Mel Smith turns up in several bits; he's the puffy-faced fellow who looks like a pixie Alfred Hitchcock.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Angelika Film Center, Plaza, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

**To Have and Have Not** (1944)—In this picture, Humphrey Bogart, the greatest cynical hero of them all, found himself in Martinique, where a beautiful big cat of a girl named Lauren Bacall slouched across the screen for the first time and managed to make the question "Anybody got a match?" sound like the most insolent and insinuating of demands. Howard Hawks directed this slickly professional, thoroughly enjoyable Second World War melodrama, which was taken from what Warner Brothers advertised as Ernest Hemingway's novel, with William Faulkner listed as co-writer (with Jules Furthman) of the screenplay—making this the only movie on record with two Nobel Prize-winning authors. Don't be misled: it's the Warners mixture as before—sex and politics—but better this time. Asked to describe the genesis of this film, Hawks explained that once when he and Ernest Hemingway were hunting together, he had claimed that he could take Hemingway's worst story and make a movie of it. Hemingway asked which was his worst, and Hawks said "To Have and Have Not." According to Hawks, Hemingway then explained that he had written it in one sitting when he needed money. Hawks made good on his boast, but he and the screenwriters cheated a bit: the movie deals with what may have occurred in the lives of the characters before the novel begins. This film belongs to the movie era in which characters were clearly defined, and if a man was perverse, you knew he was a Nazi. The refreshingly, daringly sexy Bacall burst through the conventions of the era. A writer said of her that her "husky, underslung voice, which is ideal for the double-entendre, makes even her simplest remarks sound like jungle mating cries." Hoagy Carmichael provides the music and accompaniment for Bacall's facial exercises; the singing voice is that of Andy Williams, and it never sounded sexier than when coming out of her. Lauren Bacall's début had, in a sense, been pretested: Jules Furthman had worked out that good-bad-girl act for Betty Compson in "Docks of New York" (1928) and perfected it on Marlene Dietrich in "Morocco" (1930). With Walter Brennan and Dolores Moran.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 23.)

**Wild at Heart**—Right from the start, just about everything is wrong with David Lynch's new movie, and the wrongness has an escalating, vertiginous quality. Every false move seems to lead to another, more disastrous than the one before. It's a buzzing, hyperkinetic picture, but its wildness is all on the surface: the images are elaborately conceived, arresting, and meaningless, like tattoos. The novel by Barry Gifford on which Lynch based his screenplay is a languorous, arty trifle about a pair of lovers named Sailor (Nicolas Cage) and Lula (Laura Dern), who drive from North Carolina to Texas and stop at ratty hotels and motels along the way; they're hard-lovin' losers who smoke a lot and don't get to the place they set out for (California). Their happiness is threatened by a variety of kinky villains, mostly of Lynch's invention: Gifford's poky Deep South odyssey is now an orgy of evil, full of graphic violence and grotesque craziness. The shocks don't have much resonance, though; the weirdness here is inexpressive and trivial, even silly. And the lurid villainy always seems diversionary, a baroque disguise for a bland, lifeless, and overfamiliar story. The movie is one startling lapse of taste after another; it's a sorry spectacle.—T.R. (8/27/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

**Witness for the Prosecution** (1958)—Billy Wilder's inane yet moderately entertaining version of an Agatha Christie courtroom thriller, with Charles Laughton wiggling his wattles, and Marlene Dietrich, Tyrone Power, Elsa Lanchester, Una O'Connor, Henry Daniell, Norma Varden, and Ian Wolfe. Script by Wilder and Harry Kurnitz.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Oct. 24.)

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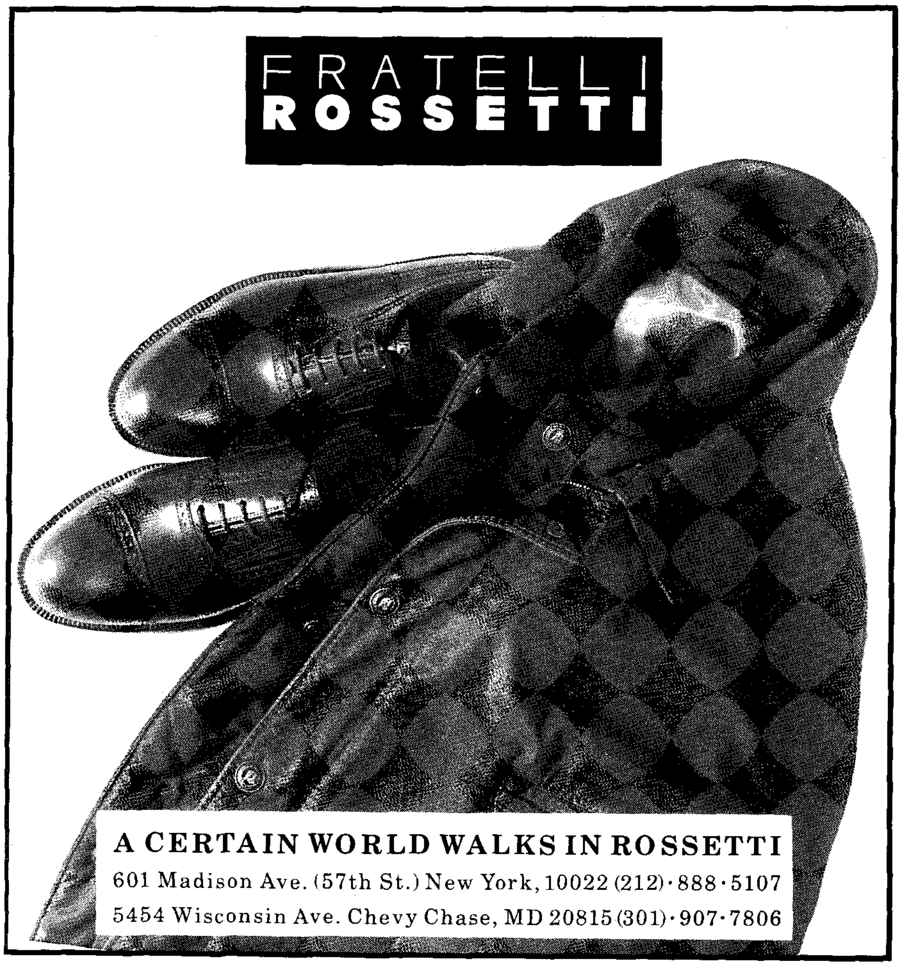

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THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## *Notes and Comment*

A FRIEND writes:

Of the million or so visitors to the headquarters of the United Nations each year, not many, I suspect, are New York City residents. Even people who work in midtown and definitely plan to get over to the U.N. one of these days—people like me, in other words—rarely seem to do so. My guess is that the place suffers from the taint of the civics lesson. People associate a row of colorful flags from many nations with homework.

I finally got around to spending some time at the U.N. recently (I was roused to action by all the U.N.-related news stories generated by the Persian Gulf crisis and the World Summit for Children, but took care to arrive on a morning when most of the world leaders and their entourages were elsewhere), and I found that my apprehensions about an unwanted return to unloved schoolrooms had been justified. It seems that my elementary school, my junior high, my high school, and the United Nations were all built in the same week by the same men. (Who knew that Le Corbusier was so active in our suburb?) The Security Council Chamber is my high-school auditorium's well-groomed twin; some of the gallery seats even have little wraparound writing platforms attached, *à la mon école*. The presiding design spirit at the U.N. is Danish modern—each of the Council Chambers was, in fact, designed by a Scandinavian—just as it was in my family's house when I was a kid. (Just as it is, for that matter, in my apartment, where my parents' hand-me-down furniture lives on.) On a first pass through the General Assembly Building, I found myself standing in front of a notice board—this was somewhere near the staff cafeteria—on which I half expected to see, on the brown plastic plaques in their aluminum tracks, mouth-watering news about macaroni and cheese or tuna casserole. Instead, a sign above the board read "PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS / PROGRAMME DES SÉANCES," and the plaques announced things like the time and place of that day's meeting of the Security Council Committee Established by Resolution 661 (1990) Concerning the Situation Between Iraq and Kuwait.

It was the second week of the new session's general debate. The general debate lasts for three weeks, and basically consists of a hundred and fifty-nine speeches—one from each U.N. member. Brazil traditionally begins the general debate. I asked a young tour guide why this was the case. "Nobody seems to know," she said. "But the Brazilians are *very* proud of it." (Her personal evidence for the end of the Cold War? Fewer people are asking what was formerly the most asked question on U.N. tours: Where did Khrushchev pound his shoe?)

I made my way to the General Assembly to hear some of the day's speeches. I caught the second half of China and stayed for most of Pakistan. The two speeches seemed to me, aside from a few hotly Karachi-oriented remarks about India's behavior in Kashmir, much the same. Both speakers circled the globe denouncing aggression, nuclear proliferation, and drug trafficking, while praising peace, justice, and human dignity. My attention wandered, then settled on the delegates from Liberia: two gentlemen in gray suits sitting quietly at their places on the General Assembly floor, shuffling papers exactly as if they still had a government to represent. My fellow-spectators (there weren't many) also seemed to be having trouble listening to the speeches. It didn't matter. We could always, if we chose, pick up transcripts from the appropriate missions or from the U.N. press center.

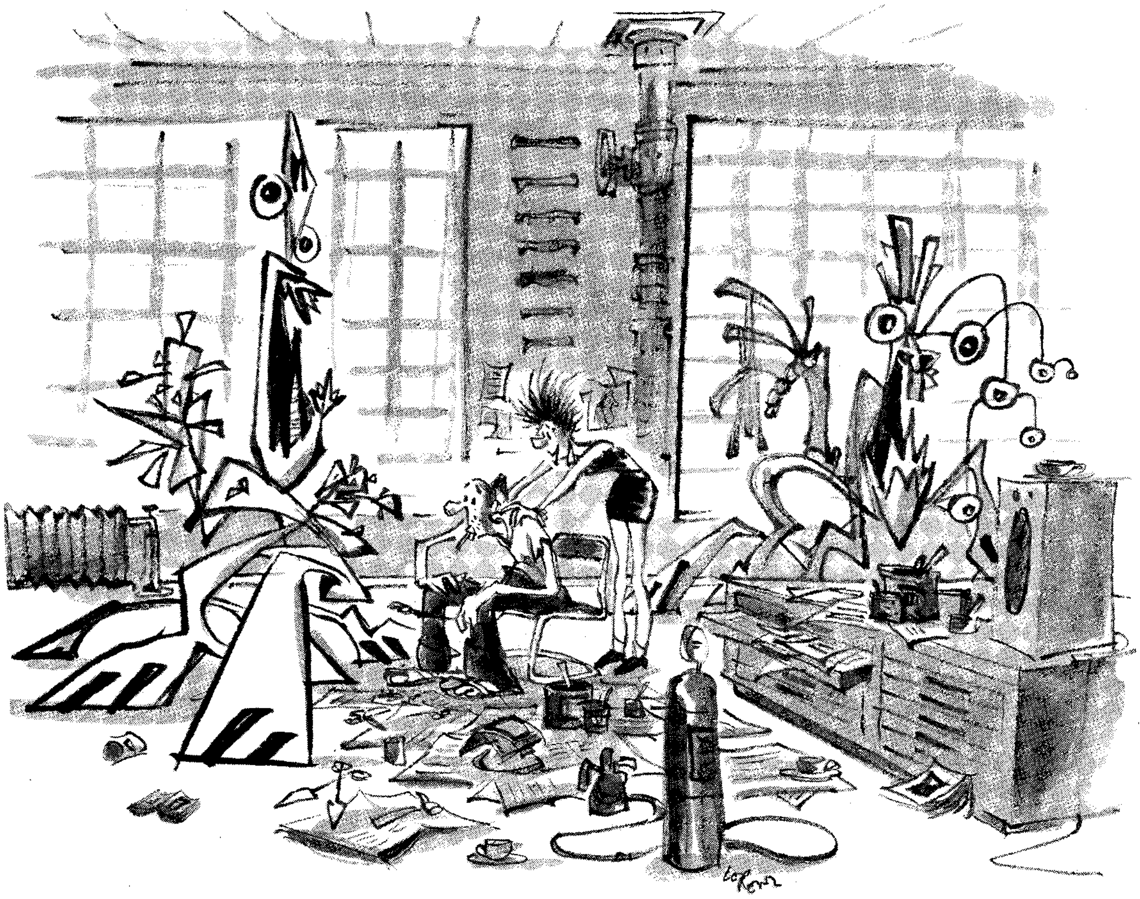
The United Nations produces a terrifying quantity of ceremonious prose. Each day, the serried racks of the press center are filled with fresh press releases, all smelling like school assignments. Reporters troll the racks, plucking out sheets. (I considered dipping into the "Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples," but didn't.) Most of the "stories" on the day I visited followed the same formula: The President or Prime Minister of X would be arriving at the delegates' entrance at such-and-such an hour, where he would be met by the Chief of Protocol. His Excellency of X would pay a courtesy call on the Assembly president, Guido de Marco, of Malta, then address

the General Assembly, and, finally, confer with Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, "before leaving Headquarters by the delegates' entrance."

Turning these jaunts—and the speeches themselves, and perhaps the Secretary-General's statements on the day's events in Liberia ("I am distressed") or Germany ("a day of truly historic significance")—into news stories is the main task of the four hundred and fifty journalists permanently accredited to the U.N. (Twice that number turn up for special occasions.) It looks to be a comfortable posting. The press center abounds with typewriters, telexes, and fax machines, and the reporters themselves are indistinguishable from the droves of international civil servants who fill the U.N. corridors: the laughing, immaculate Africans, the beautifully dressed South Americans, the hale Norwegians. And yet I somehow doubt—even while allowing that the activities of the United Nations must look very different in, say, Swaziland, from the way they look here in New York—whether U.N. press coverage will ever produce its share of journalism's great moments. And I wonder if the well-fed, rather suave look of the press center's denizens might not help explain some of the gentle cynicism with which many people, including many Americans, regard the U.N.

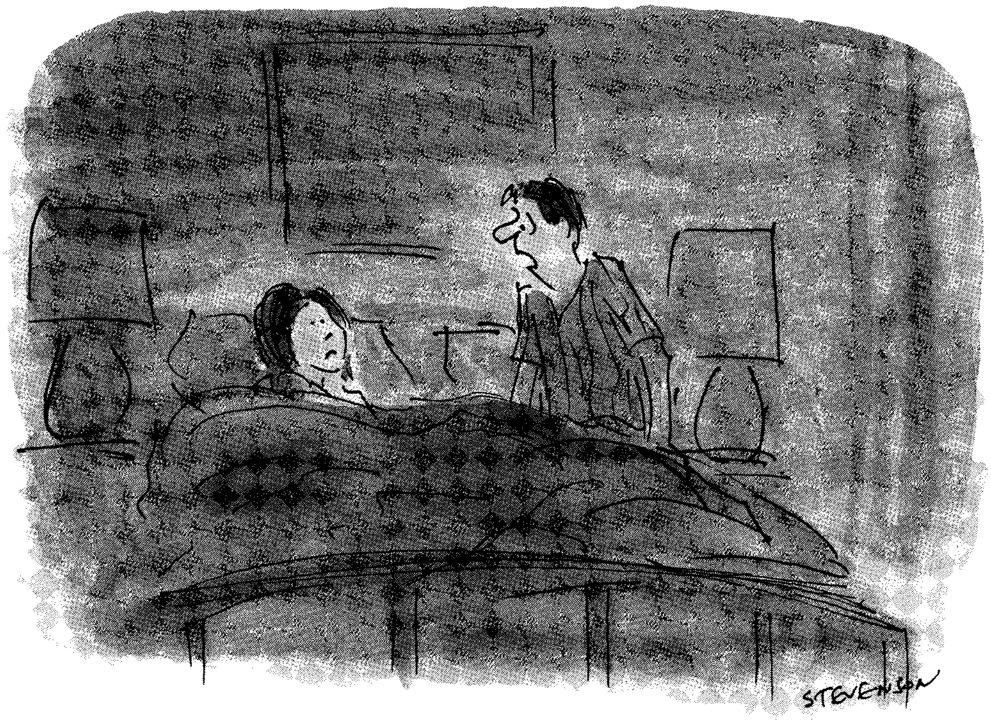
A more serious cynicism is provoked, of course, by the void that yawns between the high ideals forever being expressed at the U.N. and the less elevated deeds of some of the governments expressing those ideals. Malawi, for example, had many fine and unassailable things to say about world affairs in its contribution to the general debate. Meanwhile, the human-rights monitors at Africa Watch were releasing a study that compared the Malawi government to the Ceausescu regime in Romania, and calling for an end to "more than a quarter of a century of gross human-rights abuses."

But it hasn't been business as usual at the U.N. lately. Since Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the importance of the organization's role in the settlement of disputes has grown immeasurably. The day before I visited the General Assembly, the Emir of Kuwait, in his first public speech since being forced into exile, made a dramatic plea there for the world's help. A few days later, President Bush gave a major address from the same platform, in which he seemingly committed the United States to a diplomatic solution of the Gulf crisis under U.N. auspices. Mr. Bush's remarks not only were conciliatory toward the Mideast; they also seemed to represent a historic reconciliation of our national leadership with the U.N. The fundamental conflict between the claims of national sovereignty and those of U.N. authority clearly hasn't gone away, and, the end of the Cold War notwithstanding, the strategic goals of the Soviet Union and the United States remain distinct. The Soviets, for instance, are placing much greater emphasis on the necessity of U.N. leadership in the Mideast. Yet the possibility does seem to be flourishing that the major powers will finally recognize that the U.N. really is the best tool for the job of protecting smaller countries from larger ones.



*"But that's what being an artist is—feeling crummy before everyone else feels crummy."*

This was one of the U.N.'s founding rationales. An even more basic goal when the U.N. was being created, at the end of the Second World War, was the prevention of a Third World War—a goal widely understood, after August, 1945, to be inseparable from what was then called "the harnessing of the atom." In a ground-floor corridor between the General Assembly and the Secretariat, I ran across a display expressing this theme. It was a collection of simple objects retrieved from Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the bombs fell on those cities: bits of tile, melted teacups, melted rice bowls, melted coins, burned clothing, fragments of a window that had been found embedded in a woman's flesh. The most



*"I dreamed that I was mayor of a large American city."*

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affecting item was, strangely, the least obviously damaged. It was a statue of St. Agnes holding a lamb, recovered from the Roman Catholic cathedral in Nagasaki. The statue had been knocked on its face by the atomic blast, and a hand had broken off. It looked otherwise uninjured—until you went around to the back, where the scored, blackened, half-melted stone robes were like a Dantean vision of the walls of Hell.

I drifted outside. It was a meteorologically perfect day, and the spires of midtown glistened in the sun. Earlier, walking east on Forty-second Street, past the Beaux Arts grandeur of the public library and the Art Deco splendor of the Chrysler Building, I had been jolted by the sight of the U.N. The high-modern functionalism of the buildings had struck me as ugly and impersonal, the very definition of "postwar" in a city where nearly all beauty seems to reside in the "prewar." Why did the headquarters of the world's preëminent organization have to be markedly less grand—not to mention less inviting—than the average state capitol? Why, with the whole world's architecture to draw upon, did it have to recall, inside and out, a suburban school of inferior vintage? Over the course of the day, I realized, these questions had receded. I was now seeing even the word "postwar" in a different light. It may have been a bleak period for architecture, but I couldn't imagine a more hopeful term to describe our era.

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## *Floats*

WE met up with Haruki Kadokawa last Monday morning at Fifth Avenue and Forty-fourth Street, where he was waiting for the Columbus Day parade to begin. Mr. Kadokawa, who had been invited by Matilda Cuomo, Governor Cuomo's wife, to march with the Governor, was surrounded by his translator, his publicist, the managing director of his Los Angeles-based production company, two personal aides, and a few thousand milling paraders and spectators. "Mr. Kadokawa was asked by Mrs. Cuomo to participate in the parade last year, but he was busy directing his film 'Heaven and Earth,' " Shumi Ryu, his translator, explained. Kadokawa-san, it turns out, is not only a film director but also the biggest independent producer in Japan, with some sixty movies to his credit—including "Virus," a futuristic plague-and-biological-warfare movie with Chuck Connors and Olivia Hussey, and "Sailor Fuku to Kikan-ju," or "Schoolgirl with a Machine Gun," the No. 10 all-time hit on the Japanese big screen. "Heaven and Earth," Mr. Kadokawa's publicist, Larry Weinberg, informed us, is a samurai epic about two fifteenth-century warlords fighting for control of Japan. It's third in over-all Japanese box-office receipts, after "E.T." and another Japanese movie, "Nankyoku Monogatari." Mr. Kadokawa is also a backer and a producer of the Broadway version of James Clavell's "Shogun," which is scheduled to open in mid-November.

Kadokawa-san's mega-résumé hardly ends there, though. He is the head of Kadokawa Publishing, which was founded by his grandfather and is now the second-largest publisher of books in Japan. He is also a poet and a Shinto high priest. But the reason he was invited to join the parade has to do with his passion for sailing. Kadokawa-san loves seaborne adventures: in 1980, he took a seventy-year-old Japanese catamaran from Tokyo to Valparaiso, Chile, in order to check the theory that there may be such a thing as a "black current" in the Pacific Ocean. (He believes there is.) In 1989, he decided to commission an exact replica of Columbus's ship Santa Maria, and sail it from Barcelona to Kobe on the occasion of the quincentenary of Columbus's landfall in the Western Hemisphere. Kadokawa-san told us that he wants to fulfill Columbus's original intention of blazing a trade route to the Orient, and, more important, to create a symbol of what he believes to be the coming age of global harmony and coöperation. He brushed aside suggestions of commercial or promotional motives, but members of the media who for any reason did get interested in his voyage were welcome to read up on it in a glossy eight-page Santa Maria Foundation brochure.

The Kadokawa version of the Santa Maria is being built now at a shipyard in Barcelona, and will be launched next February. On July 13, 1991, after a few months' training, Kadokawa-san plans to leave Barcelona harbor and, with himself as captain of a crew of twenty-six, set off on a ten-month, seventeen-thousand-mile journey—

first to San Salvador (where Columbus landed) and, from there, through the Panama Canal, to Colombia, Acapulco, Hawaii, Guam, and, finally, Kobe. "The shape of the ship is very odd," Kadokawa-san said. "It is shaped like a bowl, because the original was used to carry cargo. Because of this particular shape, it doesn't have much balance, and the risk that it will sink is very, very high. And yet I feel that, even if the risk is high, the crucial factor in successfully navigating the boat is that the captain be calm. On three previous sailing occasions, I was very close to death, but I managed to pull the boat through. And, besides, I have taken out a lot of insurance."

We had heard that Mr. Kadokawa had brought his own float to the Columbus Day parade, so we crossed Fifth Avenue to have a look. We found the float—actually, two floats—parked right behind the Polly-O entry, and surrounded by members of the Associazione Nazionale Carabinieri D'Italia, Sezione di New York. One of the floats was a three-tiered mini Japanese palace, inhabited by a warlord and a woman in kimonos and two black-armor-clad samurai; the other was a mockup of the Santa Maria, topped with a Christopher Columbus stand-in, a couple of Indians, a Spanish sailor, and a conquistador. As if to dispel any confusion about the presence of Japanese themes in a Columbus Day parade, signs on the palace and the boat summarized Mr. Kadokawa's ambitious sailing plans.

Five horse-mounted samurai were biding their time between the two floats, and one of the aides explained to us that they had been flown in from Tokyo for this very occasion, and that they were dressed in armor borrowed from "Heaven and Earth." "They all love New York," she added. "And they can't wait to go to the Palladium."

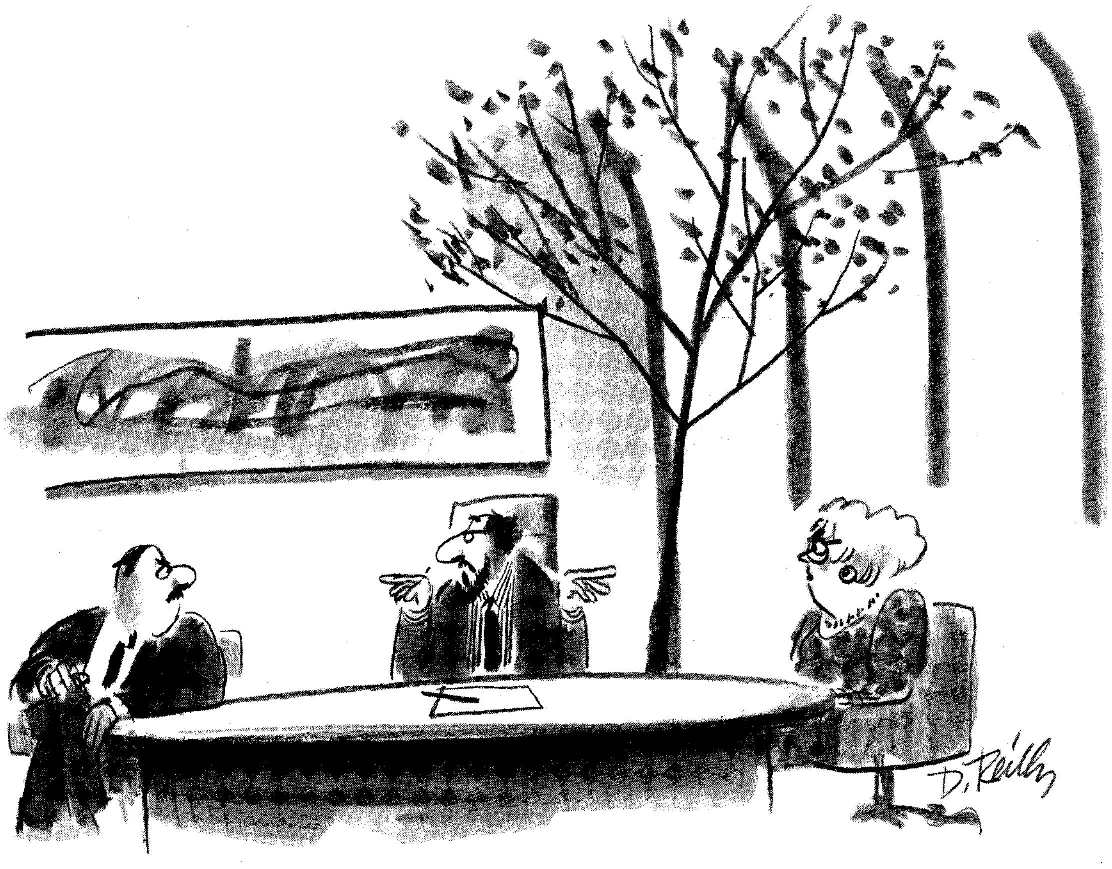
The parade began. We made our way in the direction of Kadokawa-san and his party, and finally reached him at Rockefeller Center as he was trying to keep abreast of Governor Cuomo. At Sixty-second Street, Kadokawa-san seemed momentarily taken aback by a heckler who was shouting "Stop the Democratic and Republican Party slush fund!" at the top of his lungs. At Sixty-fourth Street, Mr. Weinberg, who was carrying a cellular phone, told Ms. Ryu, "I've just been called from the float. It's going to be fabulous. People are cheering."

We headed back down Fifth and found the trailer-borne Santa Maria and the warlord's palace momentarily arrested by heavy crosstown traffic at Fifty-third Street. The floats were between the East Ramapo Senior High School Marching Band, of Spring Valley, New York, and the Italian Folk Dance Group, from North Brunswick, New Jersey. People were cheering and clapping. But a man next to us who had obviously not read the explanatory signs looked at the warlord's palace and said, "They must have got that from some other parade."

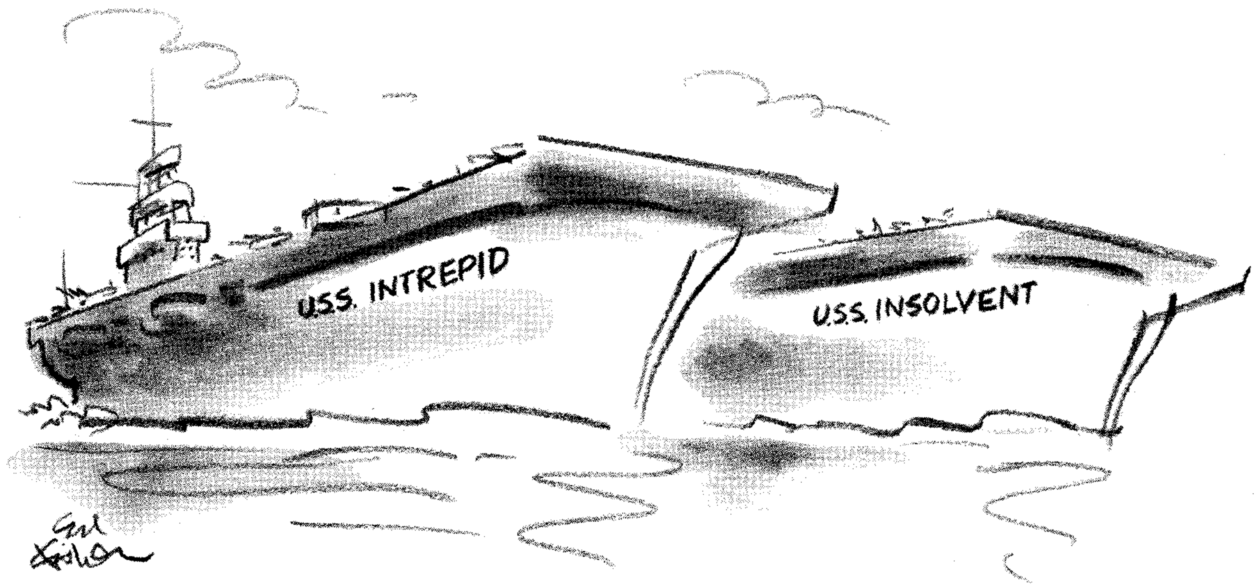
## *Snowballs*

THE other day, we were at Stuart Himmelfarb's parents' house, in the Bronx, where Stuart keeps his snowball collection—the only snowball collection in the world, to our knowledge. Stuart does not keep his collection at his own house, in Hartsdale, because his wife, Beverly, does not share his enthusiasm for snowballs. Three years ago, when Stuart and Beverly got married, Beverly gladly signed a prenuptial agreement disclaiming any right or title to or interest in Stuart's snowballs.

The Himmelfarb house is three stories high, but the Himmelfarbs live only on the second floor. The first floor is largely taken over by big cartons of inventory from Stuart's luggage business. The snowballs are on the third floor. Stuart's mother, Ruth, took us to the spare room, where the snowballs—there are twenty-eight of them—were stored in their own freezer, a half-size Coldspot. Ruth is a short, energetic woman in her sixties, who works in a blood bank and does share Stuart's enthusiasm for snowballs. "We



*"You have to face the possibility that your marriage may* never *recapture the magic of the Dump Johnson days."*



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used to keep them downstairs in the kitchen," she explained, "but my refrigerator can act up."

The snowballs were piled pell-mell on two shelves. Some were sealed in plastic sandwich bags. Some were in clear souvenir-baseball cases. One was in a plastic-foam coffee cup. That snowball, Ruth said, was given to her by someone in Connecticut, and was the only out-of-state snowball and the only snowball not created by Stuart. Each of the snowballs was labelled carefully with the date on which it was formed. There was, for instance, a snowball from the largest blizzard ever to hit New York City in the month of February (February 6 and 7, 1978). "That blizzard really renewed my interest in snowballs," Stuart had told us on the phone, adding that 1978 was the best year for snow that he could remember. As a result of the heavy snowfall that year, a record for the most consecutive days of no alternate-side-of-the-street parking in New York City was set (over fifty days). There was also a snowball from the ten-inch freak blizzard of April 6, 1982, which snowed out the Yankees' opener, as well as the next three games. A large snowball from February 29, 1972, commemorates the rarity of snow's being on the ground on a day that set a modern heat record (sixty-two degrees) and was also in a leap year. Some of the snowballs are duplicates, which Stuart said he would be willing to trade. He would particularly like a snowball from the blizzard of 1947.

Ruth showed us the oldest snowball, the Lindsay, made during the blizzard of February 9, 1969, and named after the Mayor, who was blamed for the city's failure to mobilize quickly after the storm. On the tenth and fifteenth birthdays of the Lindsay, Stuart threw a party. Only seven people came to the first party—"They thought Stuart was crazy," Ruth said—but the second was a gala. Invitations were sent, specifying that proper attire was gloves, coat, and hat. Except for snow peas, only white food was served: cottage cheese, cream cheese, marshmallows, vanilla ice cream, white mints, and a snowman fashioned from tuna (the body) and whitefish (the head). Each of the forty-seven guests was given an official "collector's edition" snowball, made from snow that Stuart had scooped up earlier that day from his Aunt Else's yard, in Scarsdale. Stuart also invited the press to the party. WABC sent a camera crew, and the *Times* ran a small piece. Other publicity followed, including a spot on "Late Night with David Letterman," a promotional event at Great Adventure, in New Jersey, and an appearance on a Japanese TV show based on "What's My Line?"

The Lindsay, now a sooty lump of ice the size of a peach pit, is Stuart's earliest surviving snowball, but not the first that he collected. As a kid, Stuart used to hide snowballs under the meat that his Uncle Max, a butcher, stored in the Himmelfarb freezer. Most of these, according to Stuart and his mother, were thrown away by Stuart's father, Willy. Willy is more impressed by Stuart's collection of what Stuart calls "useless information" than by his collection of snowballs. Stuart has observed, for example, that all cobs of corn have an even number of kernels around the circumference, usually twelve, fourteen, or sixteen. He has determined that there are a hundred and nineteen ridges on the edge of a quarter and a hundred and eighteen on a dime. And he claims that the holes on most saltshakers in diners and restaurants are arranged in the shape of a Star of David, because the founder of the company that manufactures the saltshakers is Jewish.

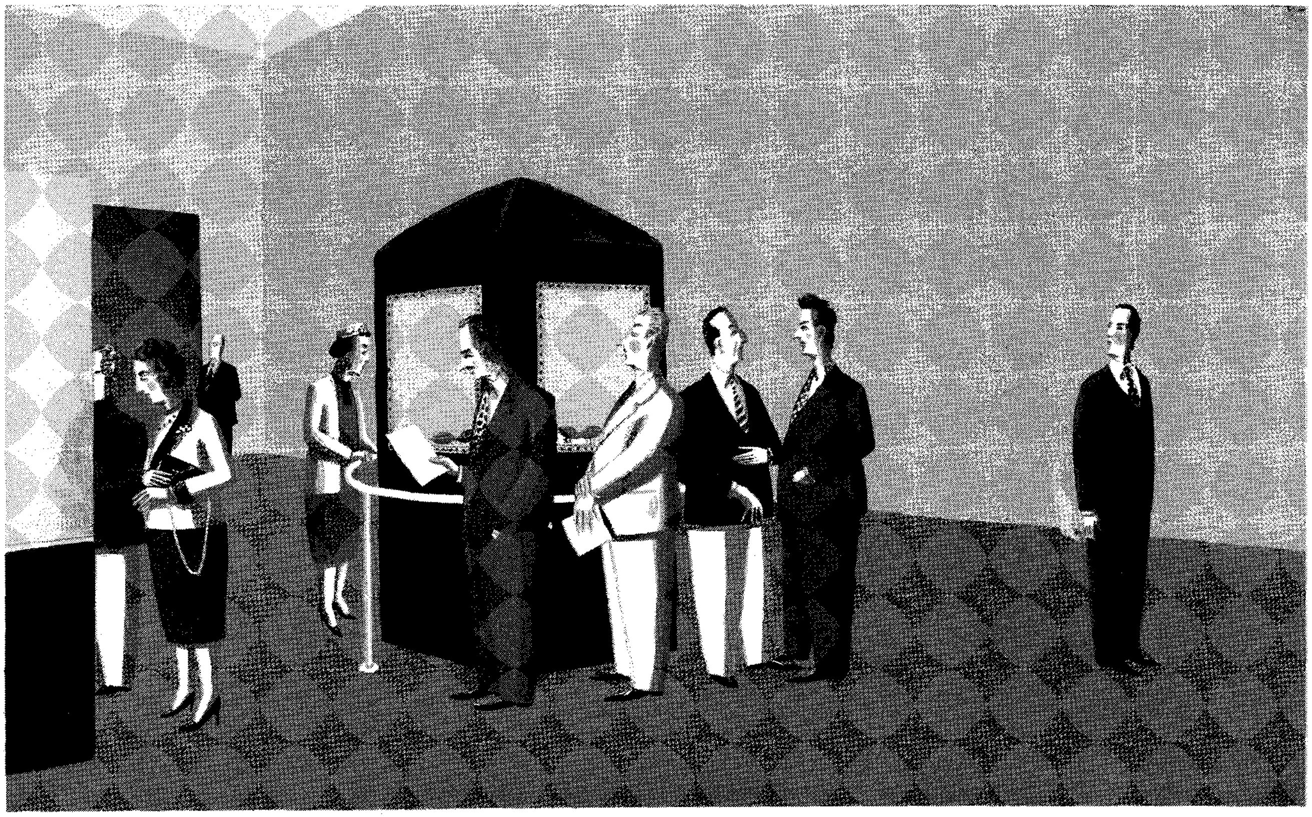
In the living room, as Ruth showed us a photograph of the cake for the Lindsay's tenth birthday, Willy said, "Some of the snowballs I must have thrown out, because Stuart says I did. I don't remember it, but I must have. Maybe I did, maybe I didn't."

"You throw out things," Ruth said.

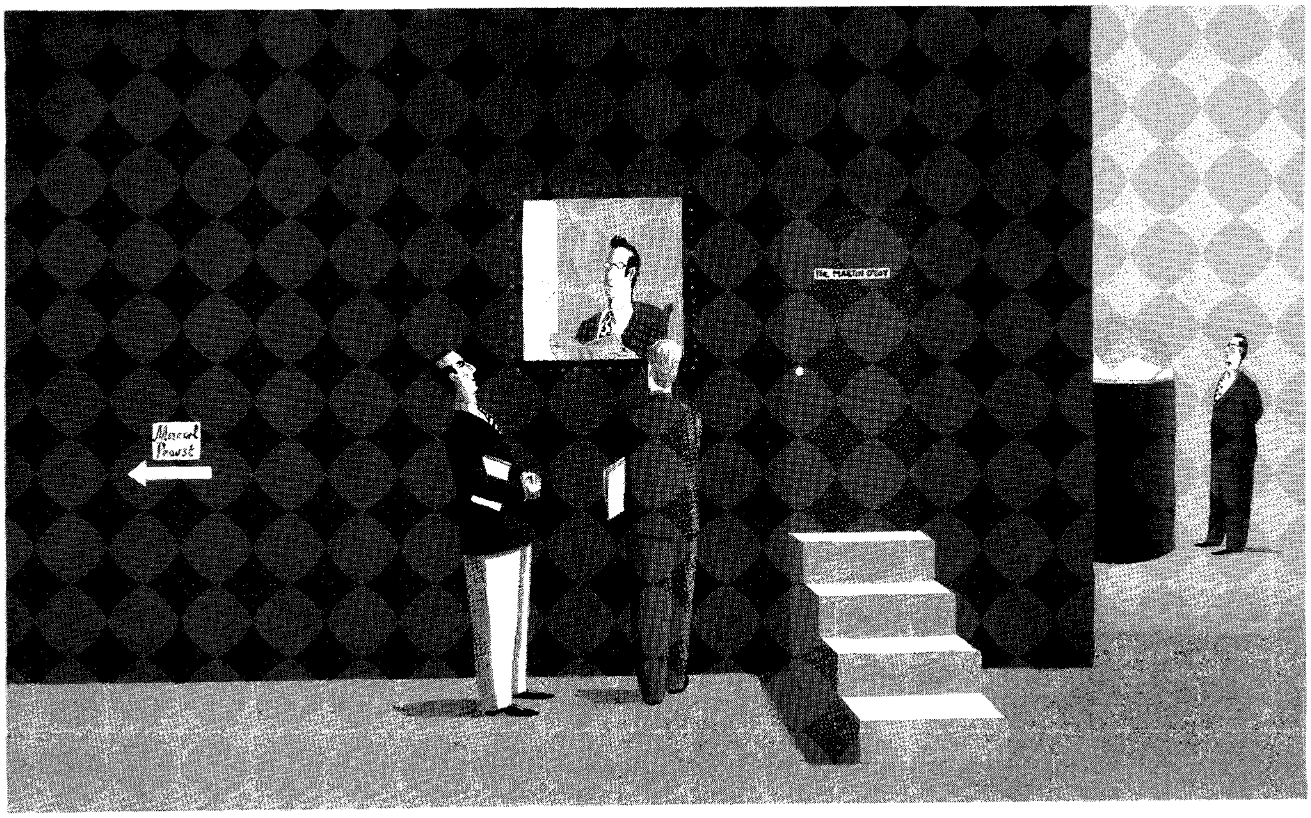
Willy shrugged. "I'm not a collector," he said. "And when I saw there was a whole freezerful of snowballs, it didn't make sense. But to Stuart it made sense. All of a sudden, he makes a big party and invites so many people. And then I see the media participating, and everybody's making a big issue out of it. Oh, my God, I couldn't get over it! To me, it was silly, but he was on Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 5. He was on 'David Letterman' with Loretta Lynn. And other people came over here. I'm telling you, there was no end to all of it."

Ruth looked over at us. "There's still no end to it," she said.

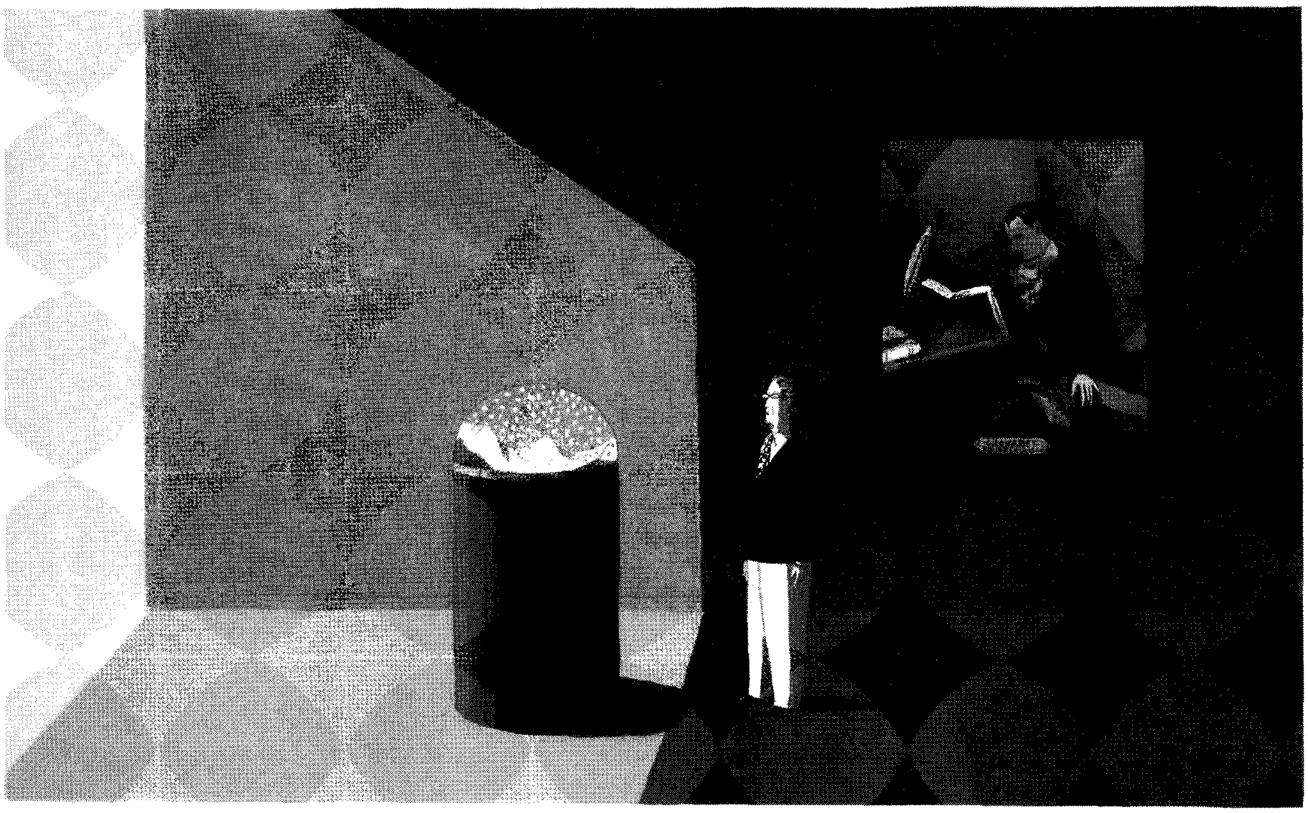
# IN THE MUSEUM OF LITERATURE



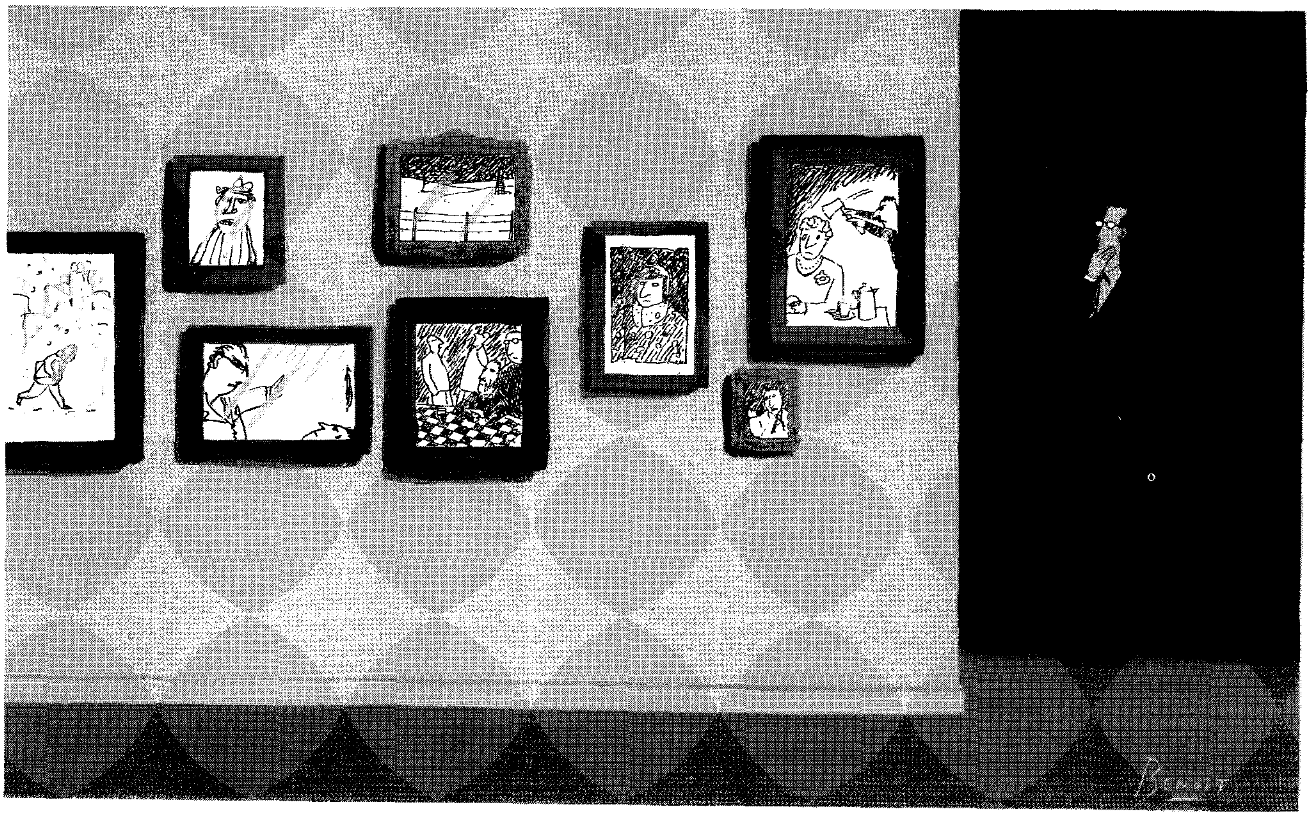
"Here you see the 'Madeleines' of Marcel Proust."


MR. MARTIN O'COY
Marcel Proust

"Mr. Martin O'Coy, the first man in the world to finish reading James Joyce's 'Finnegans Wake.' "



*"Les Neiges d'Antan," by François Villon.*



*Dostoyevski always began with a drawing. Regrettably, many of the drawings were burned under Stalin.*

# S ANGEL

ON the morning of his cousin's wedding, Ira performed his toilet, as he always did, with patience, hope, and ruthless punctilio. He put on his Italian wool trousers, his silk shirt, his pink socks, to which he ascribed a certain sexual felicity, and a slightly worn but still serviceable Willi Smith sports jacket. He shaved the delta of skin between his eyebrows, and took a few extra minutes to clean out the inside of his car, a battered, faintly malodorous Japanese hatchback of no character whatever. Ira never went anywhere without expecting that when he arrived he would meet the woman with whom he had been destined to fall in love. He drove across Los Angeles from Palms to Arcadia, where his cousin Sheila was being married in a synagogue Ira got lost trying to find. When he walked in late he disturbed the people sitting at the back of the *shul*, and his Aunt Lillian, when he joined her, pinched his arm quite painfully. The congregation was dour and Conservative, and as the service dragged on Ira found himself awash in a nostalgic tedium, and he fell to wishing for irretrievable things.

At the reception that followed, in the banquet room of the old El Imperio Hotel, in Pasadena, he looked in vain for one of his more interesting young female cousins, such as Zipporah, from Berkeley, who was six feet tall and on the women's crew at Cal, or that scary one, Leah Black, who had twice in their childhood allowed Ira to see what he wanted to see. Both Ira and Sheila sprang from a rather disreputable branch of Wisemans, however, and her wedding was poorly attended by the family. All the people at Ira's table were of the groom's party, except for Ira's great-aunts, Lillian and Sophie, and Sophie's second husband, Mr. Lapidus.

"You need a new sports jacket," said Aunt Sophie.

"He needs a new *watch*," said Aunt Lillian.

Mr. Lapidus said that what Ira needed was a new barber. A lively discussion arose at table seventeen, as the older people began to complain about contemporary hair styles, with Ira's itself—there was some fancy clipperwork involved—cited frequently as an instance of their inscrutability. Ira zoned out and ate three or four pounds of the salmon carpaccio with lemon cucumber and cilantro that the waiters kept bringing around, and also a substantial number of boletus-and-goat-cheese profiteroles. He watched the orchestra members, particularly the suave-looking black tenor saxophonist with dreadlocks, and tried to imagine what they were thinking about as they blew all that corny cha-cha-cha. He watched Sheila and her new husband whispering and box-stepping and tried to imagine the same thing. She seemed pleased enough—smiling and flushed and thrilled to be wearing that dazzling dress—but she didn't look as though she were in love, as he imagined love to look. Her eye was restive, vaguely troubled, as if she were trying to remember exactly who this man was, with his arms around her waist, tipping her backward on one leg and planting a kiss on her throat.

It was as he watched Sheila and Barry walk off the dance floor that the woman in the blue dress caught Ira's eye, then looked away. She was sitting with two other women, at a table under one of the giant palm trees that stood in pots all across the banquet room, which the hotel called the Oasis Room and had decorated to suit. When Ira returned her gaze he felt a pleasant internal flush, as though he had just knocked back a shot of whiskey. The woman's expression verged a moment on nearsightedness before collapsing into a vaguely irritated scowl. Her hair was frizzy and tinted blond, her lips were thick and red but grim and disapproving, and her eyes, which might have been gray or brown, were painted to match her electric dress. Subsequent checking revealed that her body had aged better than her fading face, which nonetheless he found beautiful, and in which, in the skin at her throat and around her eyes, he thought he read strife and sad experience and a willingness to try her luck.

Ira stood and approached the woman, on the pretext of going over to the bar. As he did so he stole another long look, and eavesdropped on an instant of her conversation. Her voice was soft and just a little woeful as she addressed the women beside her, saying something deprecating, it seemed to Ira, about lawyers' shoes. The holes in her earlobes were filled with simple gold posts. Ira swung like a comet past the table, trailing, as he supposed, a sparkling wake of lustfulness and Eau Sauvage, but she seemed not to notice him, and when he reached the bar he found, to his surprise, that he genuinely wanted a drink. His body was unpredictable and resourceful in malfunction, and he was not, as a result, much of a drinker; but it was an open bar, af-

RECEPTIONIST
Leo Cullum

• •

ter all. He ordered a double shot of Sauza.

There were two men talking behind him, waiting for their drinks, and Ira edged a little closer to them, without turning around, so that he could hear better. He was a fourth-year drama student at U.C.L.A. and diligent about such valuable actorly exercises as eavesdropping, spying, and telling complicated lies to fellow-passengers on airplanes.

"That Charlotte was a class-A, top-of-the-line, capital-B-I-T bitch," said one of the men, in the silky tones of an announcer on a classical-music station. "And fucked up from her ass to her eyebrows." He had a very faint New York accent.

"Exactly, exactly," said the other, who sounded older, and well accustomed to handing out obsequious counsel to young men. "No question. You had to fire her."

"I should have done it the day it happened. Ha-ha. But instead—pow, fired in her own bed."

"Exactly. Ha-ha."

"Ira!" It was his cousin, the bride, bright and still pink from dancing. Sheila had long, kinky black hair, spectacular eyelashes, and a nose that, like Ira's, flirted dangerously, but on the whole successfully, with immenseness. He thought she looked really terrific, and he congratulated her wistfully. Ira and Sheila had at one time been close. Sheila hung an arm around his neck and kissed him on the cheek. Her breath blew warm in his ear. "What is that you're drinking?"

"Tequila," he said. He turned to try to get a glimpse of the men at the bar, but it was too late. They had been replaced by a couple of elderly women with empty highball glasses and giant clip-on earrings.

"Can I try?" She sipped at it and made a face. "I hope it makes you feel better than it tastes."

"It couldn't," Ira said, taking a more appreciative pull of his own.

Sheila studied his face, biting at her lip. They hadn't seen one another since the evening, over a year before, when she had taken him to see some dull and infuriating Soviet movie—"Shadow of Uzbek Love," or something like that—at U.C.L.A. She was looking, it seemed to him, for signs of change.

"So, are you dating anyone?" she said, and there was a glint of apprehension in her casual tone.

"Lots of people."

"Uh-huh. Do you want to meet someone?"

"No, thanks." Things had got a little wiggly, Ira now recalled, in the car on the way home from Westwood that night. Sheila drove one of those tiny Italian two-seaters capable of filling very rapidly with sexual tension, in particular at a stoplight, with Marvin Gaye coming over the radio and a pretty cousin in the driver's seat, chewing thoughtfully on a strand of hair. Ira, in a sort of art-house funk, had found himself babbling on about Marx and George Orwell and McCarthyism, and praying for green lights; and when they arrived at his place he had dashed up the steps into his apartment and locked the door behind him. He shook his head, wondering at this demureness, and drained the glass of tequila. He said, "Do you want to dance?"

They went out onto the floor and spun around a few times slowly to "I'll Never Be the Same." Sheila felt at once soft and starchy in her taffeta dress, gigantic and light as down.

"I really wish you would meet my friend Carmen," said Sheila. "She needs to meet a nice man. She lives next door to my parents in Altadena. Her husband used to beat her but now they're divorced. She has the most beautiful gray eyes."

At this Ira stiffened, and he blew the count.

"Sitting right over there under the palm tree? In the blue dress?"

"Ouch! That's my foot."

"Sorry."

"So you noticed her! Great. Go on, I., ask her to dance. She's so lonesome anymore."

The information that the older woman might actually welcome his overtures put him off, and somehow made him less certain of success. Ira tried to formulate a plausible excuse.

"She looks mean," he said. "She gave me a nasty look not five minutes ago. Oh, hey. It's Donna."

"Donna!"

Donna Furman, in a sharp gray sharkskin suit, approached and kissed the bride, first on the hand with the ring, then once on each cheek, in a gesture that struck Ira as oddly papal and totally Hollywood. Donna started to tell Sheila how beautiful she looked, but then some people with cameras came by and swept Sheila away, so Donna threw out her arms to Ira, and the cousins embraced. She wore her short hair slicked back with something that had an ozone smell, and it crackled against Ira's ear. Donna was a very distant relation, and several years older than Ira, but, as the Furmans had lived in Glassell Park, not far from Ira's family in Mount Washington, Ira had known Donna all his life, and he was glad to see her.

This feeling of gladness was not entirely justified by recent history, as Donna, a girl with a clever tongue and a scheming imagination, had grown into a charming but unreliable woman, and if Ira had stopped to consider he might, at first, have had a bone or two to pick with his fourth cousin once removed. She was a good-looking, dark-complected lesbian—way out in the open about that—with a big bust and a twelve-thousand-dollar smile. The vein of roguery that had found its purest expression in Sheila's grandfather, Milton Wiseman, a manufacturer of diet powders and placebo aphrodisiacs, ran thin but rich through Donna's character. She talked fast and took recondite drugs and told funny stories about famous people whom she claimed to know. Despite the fact that she worked for one of the big talent agencies in Culver City, in their music division, and made ten times what Ira did waiting tables and working summers at a Jewish drama camp up in Idyllwild, Donna owed Ira, at the time of this fond embrace, three hundred and twenty-five dollars.

"We ought to go out to Santa Anita tonight," Donna said, winking one of her moist brown eyes, which she had inherited from her mother, a concentration-camp survivor, a Hollywood costume designer, and a very sweet lady who had taken an overdose of sleeping pills when Donna was still a teen-ager. Donna's round, sorrowful eyes made it impossible to doubt that somewhere deep within her lay a wise and tormented soul; in her line of work they were a trump card.

"I'd love to," said Ira. "You can stake me three hundred and twenty-five bucks."

"Oh, right! I forgot about that!" Donna said, squeezing Ira's hand. "I have my checkbook in the car."

"I heard you brought a date, Donna," Ira went on, not wanting to bring out the squirrelliness in his cousin right off the bat. When Donna began to squeeze your hand it was generally a portent of fictions and false rationales. She was big on touching, which was all right with Ira. He liked being touched. "So where is the unfortunate girl?"

## THE SIMPLE TRUTH

I bought a dollar and a half's worth of small red potatoes,
took them home, boiled them in their jackets,
and ate them for dinner with a little butter and salt.
Then I walked through the dried fields
on the edge of town. In middle June the light
hung on in the dark furrows at my feet,
and in the mountain oaks overhead the birds
were gathering for the night, the jays and mockers
squawking back and forth, the finches still darting
into the dusty light. The woman who sold me
the potatoes was from Poland; she was someone
out of my childhood in a pink spangled sweater and sunglasses
praising the perfection of all her fruits and vegetables
at the roadside stand and urging me to taste
even the pale, raw sweet corn trucked all the way,
she swore, from New Jersey. "Eat, eat," she said.
"Even if you don't I'll say you did."
                                        Some things
you know all your life. They are so simple and true
they must be said without the elegance of rhyme,
they must be laid on the table beside the saltshaker,
the glass of water, the absence of light gathering
in the shadows of picture frames, they must be
naked and alone, they must stand for themselves.
My friend Henri and I arrived at this together in 1965,
before I went away, before he began to kill himself,
and the two of us to betray our love. Can you taste
what I'm saying? It is onions or potatoes, a pinch
of simple salt, the wealth of melting butter, it is obvious,
it stays in the back of your throat like a truth
you never uttered because the time was always wrong,
it stays there for the rest of your life, unspoken,
made of that dirt we call earth, the metal we call salt,
in a form we have no words for, and you live on it.

—Philip Levine

• •

"Over there," Donna said, inclining her head toward Ira as though what she was about to say were inside information capable of toppling a regime or piling up a fortune in a single afternoon. "At that table under the palm tree, there. With those other two women. The tall one in the flowery thing, with the pointy nose. Her name's Audrey."

"Does she work with you?" said Ira, happy to have an excuse to stare openly at Carmen, seated to the right of Donna's date and now looking back at Ira in a way that he thought could hardly be mistaken. He wiggled his toes a few times within his lucky pink socks.

Donna's date, Audrey, waved her fingers at them. She was pretty, with an expensive, blunt hairdo and blue eyes, although her nose was as pointed as a marionette's.

"She lives in my building. Audrey's at the top, at the very summit, I., of a *vast* vitamin pyramid. Like, we're talking, I don't know, ten thousand people, from Oxnard to Norco. Here, I'll take you over." She took hold of the sleeve of Ira's jacket, then noticed the empty shot glass in his hand. "Hold on, let me buy you a drink." This was said without a trace of irony. "Drinking shots?"

"Sauza. Two-story."

"A C.C.-and-water with a twist and a double Sauza," she said to the bartender. "Tequila makes you unlucky with women."

"See that blonde Audrey is sitting beside?"

"Yeah? With the nasty mouth?"

"I'd like to be unlucky with her."

"Drink this," said Donna, handing Ira a shot glass filled to the brim with liquid the very hue of hangover and remorse. "From what I heard, she's a basket case, I. Bad husband. A big mess. She keeps taking these beta-carotene tablets every time she has a Seven-and-7, like it's some kind of post-divorce diet or I don't know."

"I think she likes me." They had started toward the table but stopped now to convene a hasty parley on the dance floor, beneath the frond of a squat fan palm. Donna had been giving Ira sexual advice since he was nine.

"How old are you now—twenty-one?"

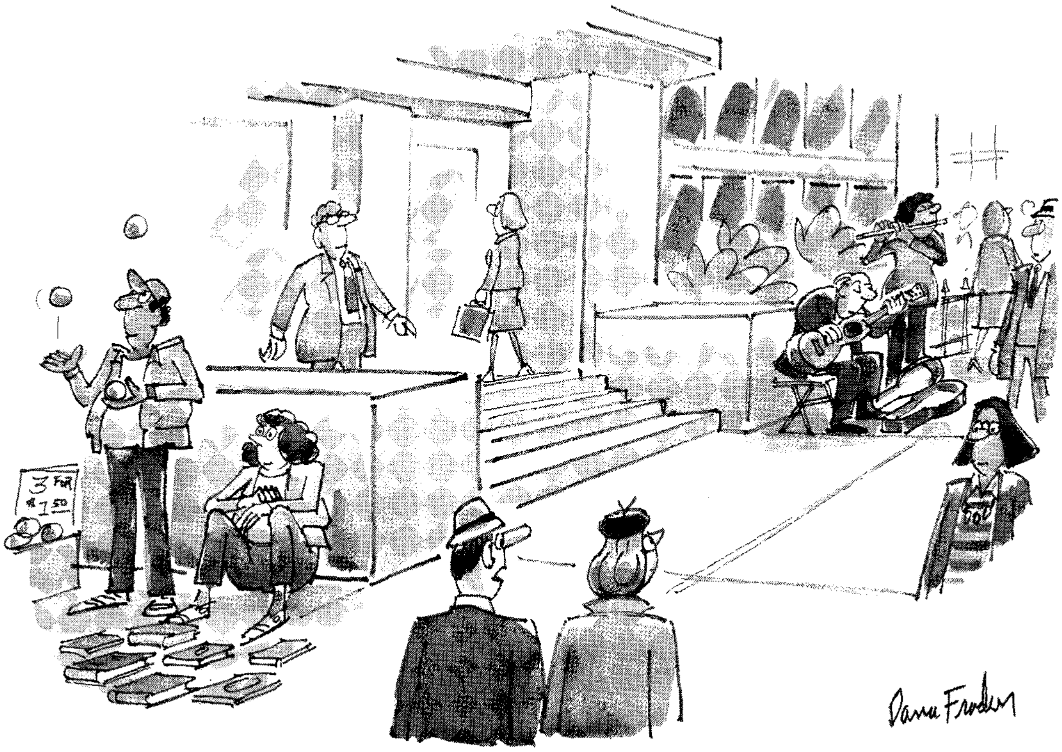
"Almost."

"She's older than I am, Ira!" Donna patted herself on the chest. "You don't want to get involved with someone so old. You want someone who still has all her delusions intact, or whatever."

Ira studied Carmen as his cousin spoke, sensing the truth in what she said. He had yet to fall in love to the degree that he felt he was capable of falling, had never written villanelles or declarations veiled in careful metaphor, nor sold his blood plasma to buy champagne or jonquils, nor haunted a mailbox or a phone booth or a certain café, nor shouted his beloved's name in the streets at three in the morning, heedless of the neighbors, and it seemed possible that to fall for a woman who had been around the block a few times might be to rob himself of many of the purely ornamental elements, the swags and antimacassars of first love. No doubt Carmen had had enough of such things. And yet it was her look of disillusion, of detachment, those stoical gray eyes in the middle of that lovely, beaten face, that most attracted him. It would be wrong to love her, he could see that; but he believed that every great love was in some measure a terrible mistake.

"Just introduce me to her, Donnie," he said, "and you don't have to pay me back."

"Pay you back what?" said Donna, lighting up her halogen smile.



*"It just occurred to me that I don't seem to see as many mimes around as I used to."*

• •

CARMEN *was* a basket case. The terra-cotta ashtray before her on the table, stamped with the words "EL IMPERIO," was choked with the slender butts of her cigarettes, and the lit square she held in her long, pretty fingers was trembling noticeably and spewing a huge, nervous chaos of smoke. Her gray eyes were large and moist and pink, as though she had been crying not five minutes before, and when Donna, introducing Ira, laid a hand on her shoulder, it looked as though Carmen might start in again, from the shock and the unexpected softness of this touch. All of these things might have escaped Ira's notice or been otherwise explained, but on the empty seat beside her, where Ira hoped to install himself, sat her handbag, unfastened and gaping, and one glimpse of it was enough to convince him that she was a woman out of control. Amid a blizzard of wadded florets of Kleenex, enough to decorate a small parade float, Ira spotted a miniature bottle of airline gin, a plastic bag of jelly beans (all black ones), two unidentifiable vials of prescription medication, a crumpled and torn road map, the wreckage of a Hershey bar, and a key chain, in the shape of a brontosaurus, with one sad key on it. The map was bent and misfolded in such a way that only the fragmentary words "S ANGEL," in one corner, were legible.

"Carmen Wallace, this is my adorable little cousin Ira," Donna said, using the hand that was not resting on Carmen's bare shoulder to pull at Ira's cheek. "He asked to meet you."

"How do you do," said Ira, blushing badly.

"Hi," Carmen said, setting her cigarette on the indented lip of the ashtray and extending the tips of her fingers toward Ira, who paused a moment—channelling all of his sexual energy into the center of his right palm—then took them. They were soft, and gone in an instant, withdrawn as though he had burned her.

"And this is Audrey—"

"Hi, Audrey."

"—and Doreen, who's a—friend?—of the groom's."

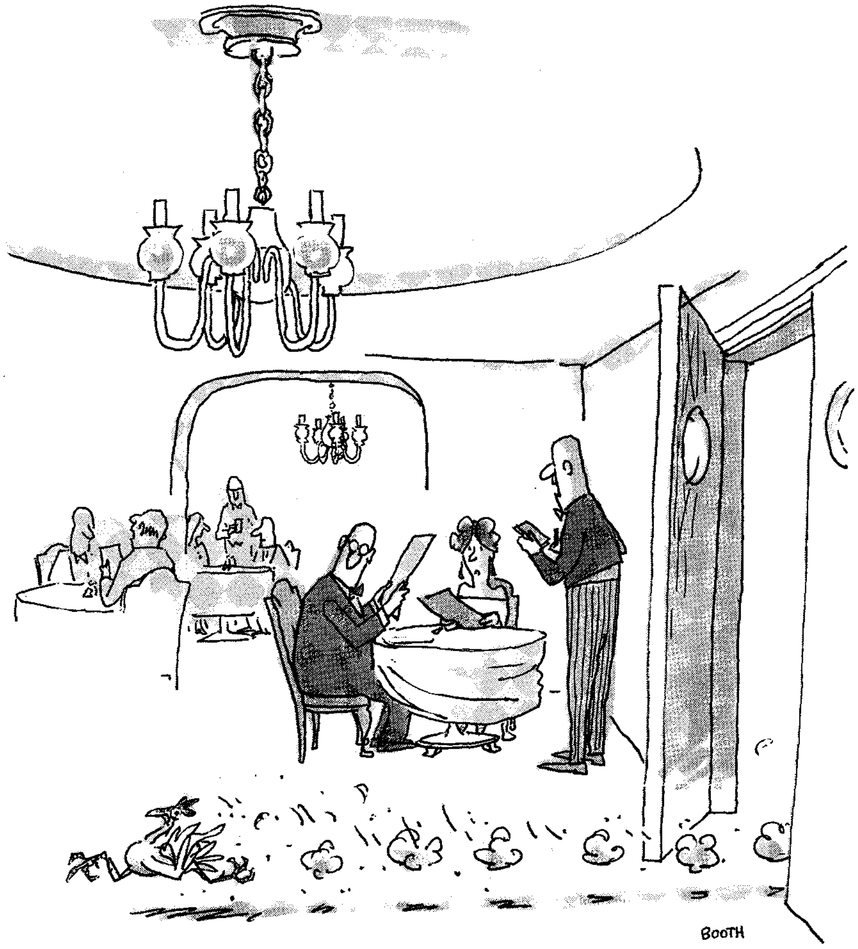
Ira shook hands with these two and, once Carmen had moved her appalling purse onto the floor beside her to make room for him, soon found himself in the enviable position of being the only man at a table of five. Doreen was wearing a bright-yellow dress with an extremely open bodice; she had come to her friend Barry's wedding exposing such a great deal of her remarkable chest that Ira wondered about her motives. She was otherwise a little on the plain side and she had a sour, horsy laugh, but she was in real estate, and Donna and Audrey, who were thinking of buying a house together, seemed to have a lot to say to her. There was nothing for him and Carmen to do but speak to each other.

"Sheila says you live next door to her folks?" Ira said. Carmen nodded, then turned her head to exhale a long jet of smoke. The contact of their eyes was brief but he thought it had something to it. There was about an inch and a half of Sauza left in Ira's glass and he drained a quarter inch of it, figuring this left him with enough to get through another five questions. He could already tell that talking to Carmen was not going to be easy, but he considered this an excellent omen. Easy flirtation had always struck him as an end in itself, and one that did not particularly interest him.

"Is it that big wooden house with the sort of, I don't know, those *things, those rafters or whatever*, sticking out from under all the roofs?" He spread the fingers of one hand and slid them under the other until they protruded, making a crude approximation of the overhanging eaves of a California bungalow. There was such a grand old house, to the north of Sheila's parents', that he'd always admired.

Another nod. She had a habit of opening her eyes very wide every so often, almost a tic, and Ira wondered if her contact lenses might be slipping.

"It's a Hetrick and Dewitt," she said bitterly, as though this were the most withering pair of epithets that could be applied to a house. These were the first words she had addressed to him, and in them, though he didn't know what she was talking about, he sensed a story. He took another little sip of tequila and nodded agreeably.



"May I recommend the Roast Free-Range Chicken with Sage-and-Celery Stuffing and real Pan Gravy?"

"You live in a Hetrick and Dewitt?" said Doreen, interrupting her conversation with Donna and Audrey to reach across Audrey's lap and tap Carmen on the arm. She looked amazed. "Which one?"

"It's the big, pretentious one on Orangeblossom, in Altadena," Carmen said, stubbing out her cigarette. She gave a very caustic sigh and then rose to her feet; she was taller than Ira had thought. Having risen to her feet rather dramatically, she now seemed uncertain of what to do next and stood wavering a little on her blue spike heels. It was clear that she felt she had been wrong to come to Sheila's wedding, but that was all she seemed able to manage, and after a moment she sank slowly back into her seat. Ira felt very sorry for her and tried to think of something she could do besides sit and look miserable. At that moment the band launched into "Night and Day," and Ira happened to look toward the table where he had left his aunts. Mr. Lapidus was pulling out Aunt Sophie's chair and taking her arm. They were going to dance.

"Carmen, would you like to dance?" Ira said, blushing, and wiggling his toes.

Her reply was no more than a whisper, and Ira wasn't sure if he'd heard it correctly, but it seemed to him that she had said, "Anything."

They walked, separately, out to the dance floor, and turned to face each other. For an awful moment they just stood, tapping their hesitant feet. But the two old people were describing a slow arc in Ira's general direction, and finally, in order to forestall any embarrassing exhortations from Mr. Lapidus, who was known for such things, Ira reached out and took Carmen by the waist and palm, and twirled her off across the wide parquet floor of the Oasis Room. It was an old-fashioned sort of tune, and there was no question of their dancing to it any way but in each other's arms.

"You're good at this," Carmen said, smiling for the first time that he could remember.

"Thanks," said Ira. He was in fact a competent dancer—his mother, preparing him for a fantastic and outmoded destiny, had taught him a handful of hokey old steps. Carmen danced beautifully, and he saw to his delight that he had somehow hit upon the precise activity to bring her, for the moment anyway, out of her beta-carotene-and-black-jelly-bean gloom. "So are you."

"I used to work at the Arthur Murray on La Cienega," she said, moving one hand a little lower on his back. "That was fifteen years ago."

This apparently wistful thought seemed to revive her accustomed gloominess a little, and she took on the faraway, hollow expression of a taxi dancer, and grew heavy in his arms. The action of her legs became overly thoughtful and accurate. Ira searched for something to talk about, to distract her with, but all of the questions he came up with had to do, at least in some respect, with *her*, and he sensed that anything on this subject might plunge her into an irrevocable sadness. At last the bubble of silence between them grew too great, and Ira pierced it helplessly.

"Where did you grow up?" he said, looking away as he spoke.

"In hotels," said Carmen, and that was that. "I don't think Sheila is happy, do you?" She coughed, and then the song came abruptly to an end. The bandleader set down his trumpet, tugged the microphone up to his mouth, and announced that in just a few short moments the cake was going to be cut.

*"I'd like my daughter to know something about engines."*

• •

WHEN they returned to the table a tall, handsome man, his black hair thinning but his chin cleft and his eyes pale green, was standing behind Carmen's empty chair, leaning against it and talking to Donna, Audrey, and Doreen. He wore a fancy, European-cut worsted suit, a purple-and-sky-blue paisley necktie, a blazing white-on-white shirt, and a tiny sparkler in the lobe of his left ear. His nose was large, bigger even than Ira's, and of a complex shape, like the blade of some highly specialized tool; it dominated his face in a way that made the man himself seem dominating. The glossy fabric of his suit jacket caught and stretched across the muscles of his shoulders. When Carmen approached her place at the table he drew her chair for her. She thanked him with a happy and astonishingly carnal smile, and as she sat down he peered, with a polished audacity that made Ira wince in envy, into the scooped neck of her dress.

"Carmen, Ira," said Doreen, "this is Jeff Freebone." As Doreen introduced the handsome Mr. Freebone, all of the skin that was visible across her body colored a rich blood-orange red. Ira's hand vanished for a moment into a tanned, forehand-smashing grip. Ira looked at Donna, hoping to see at least some hint of unimpressedness in her lesbian and often cynical gaze, but his cousin had the same shining-eyed sort of *Tiger Beat* expression on her face that Doreen and Carmen—and Audrey, for that matter—had, and Ira realized that Jeff Freebone must be very, very rich.

"What's up, Ira?" he said, in a smooth, flattened-out baritone to which there clung a faint tang of New York City, and Ira recognized him, with a start, as the coarse man at the bar who had fired an unfortunate woman named Charlotte in her own bed.

"Jeff here used to work in the same office as Barry and me," Doreen told Carmen. "Now he has his own company."

"Freebone Properties," Carmen said, looking more animated than she had all afternoon. "I've seen the signs on front lawns, right?"

"Billboards," said Donna. "Ads on TV."

"How was the wedding?" Jeff wanted to know. He went around Carmen and sat down in the chair beside her, leaving Ira to stand, off to one side, glowering at his cousin Donna, who was clearly going to leave him high and dry in this. "Did they stand under that tent thing and break the mirror or whatever?"

Ira was momentarily surprised, and gratified, by this display of ignorance, since he had taken Jeff for Jewish. Then he remembered that many of Donna's Hollywood friends spoke with a schmoozing accent whether they were

## STRIPPING AND PUTTING ON

I always felt like a bird blown through the world.
I never felt like a tree.

I never wanted a patch of this earth to stand in,
that would stick to me.

I wanted to move by whatever throb my muscles
sent to me.

I never cared for cars, that crawled on land or
air or sea.

If I rode, I'd rather another animal: horse, camel,
or shrewd donkey.

Never needed a nest, unless for the night, or when
winter overtook me.

Never wanted an extra skin between mine and the sun,
for vanity or modesty.

Would rather not have parents, had no yen for a child,
and never felt brotherly.

But I'd borrow or lend love of friend. Let friend be
not stronger or weaker than me.

Never hankered for Heaven, or shied from a Hell,
or played with the puppets Devil and Deity.

I never felt proud as one of the crowd under
the flag of a country.

Or felt that my genes were worth more or less than beans,
by accident of ancestry.

Never wished to buy or sell. I would just as well
not touch money.

Never wanted to own a thing that I wasn't born with.
Or to act by a fact not discovered by me.

I always felt like a bird blown through the world.
But I would like to lay

the egg of a world in a nest of calm beyond
this world's storm and decay.

I would like to own such wings as light speeds on,
far from this globule of night and day.

I would like to be able to put on, like clothes,
the bodies of all those

creatures and things hatched under the wings
of that world.

—May Swenson
(1913-1989)

• •

Jewish or not, even ex-cheerleaders from Ames, Iowa, and men named Lars.

"It was weird," Carmen declared, without elaborating—not even Jeff Freebone, apparently, could draw her out—and the degree of acquiescence this judgment received at the table shocked Ira. He turned to seek out Sheila among the hundreds of faces that filled the Oasis Room, to see if she was all right, but could not find her. There was a small crowd gathered around the cathedral cake at the far end of the room, but the bride did not seem to be among them. Weird—what had been weird about it? Was Sheila not, after all, in love with her two hours' husband? Ira tapped his foot to the music, self-conscious, and pretended to continue his search for Sheila, although in truth he was not looking at anything anymore. He was mortified by the quickness with which his love affair with the sad and beautiful woman of his dreams had been derailed, and all at once—the tequila he had drunk had begun to betray him—he came face to face with the distinct possibility that not only would he never find the one he was meant to find but that no one else ever did, either. The discussion around the table hurtled off into the imaginary and vertiginous world of real estate. Finally he had to pull a nearby chair over and sit down.

"I can get you three mil for it, sight unseen," Jeff Freebone was declaring. He leaned back in his seat and folded his hands behind his head.

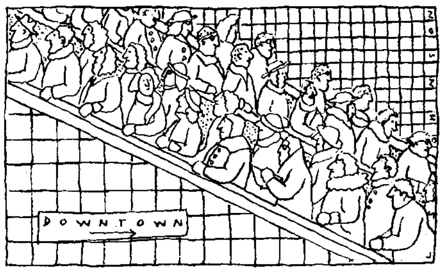
"It's worth way more," said Donna, giving Carmen a poke in the ribs. "It's a work of art, Jeff."

"It's a Hetrick and Dewitt," said everyone at the table, all at once.

"You have to see it," Doreen said.

"All right then, let's see it. I drove my Rover, we can all fit. Take me to see it."

There was a moment of hesitation, during which the four women seemed to consider the dictates of decorum and the possible implications of the proposed expedition to see the house that Carmen hated.



"The cake is always like sliced cardboard at these things, anyway," said Donna.

This seemed to decide them, and there followed a general scraping of chairs and gathering of summer wraps.

"Aren't you coming?" said Donna, leaning over Ira—who had settled into a miserable, comfortable slouch—and whispering into his ear. The others were already making their way out of the Oasis Room. Ira scowled at her.

"Hey, come on, I. She needs a realtor, not a lover. Besides, she was way too old for you." She put her arms around his neck and kissed the top of his head. "O.K., sulk. I'll call you." Then she buttoned her sharkskin jacket and turned on one heel.

After Ira had been sitting alone at the table for several minutes, half hoping his Aunt Lillian would notice his distress and bring over a piece of cake or a petit four and a plateful of her comforting platitudes, he noticed that Carmen, not too surprisingly, had left her handbag behind.

He got up from his chair and went to pick it up. For a moment he peered into it, aroused, despite himself, by the intimacy of what he was doing—like reading a woman's diary, or putting one's hand inside her empty shoe. Then he remembered his disappointment and his anger, and his fist closed around one of the vials of pills, which he quickly slipped into his pocket.

"Ira, have you seen Sheila?"

Ira dropped the purse, and whirled around. It was indeed his Aunt Lillian, but she looked very distracted and didn't seem aware of having caught Ira in the act. She kept tugging at the fringes of her wildly patterned scarf.

"Not recently," said Ira. "Why?"

Aunt Lillian explained that someone, having drunk too much, had fallen onto the train of Sheila's gown and torn it slightly; this had seemed to upset Sheila a good deal, and she had gone off somewhere, no one knew where. The bathrooms and the lobbies of the hotel had all been checked. The cake-cutting was fifteen minutes overdue.

"I'll find her," said Ira.

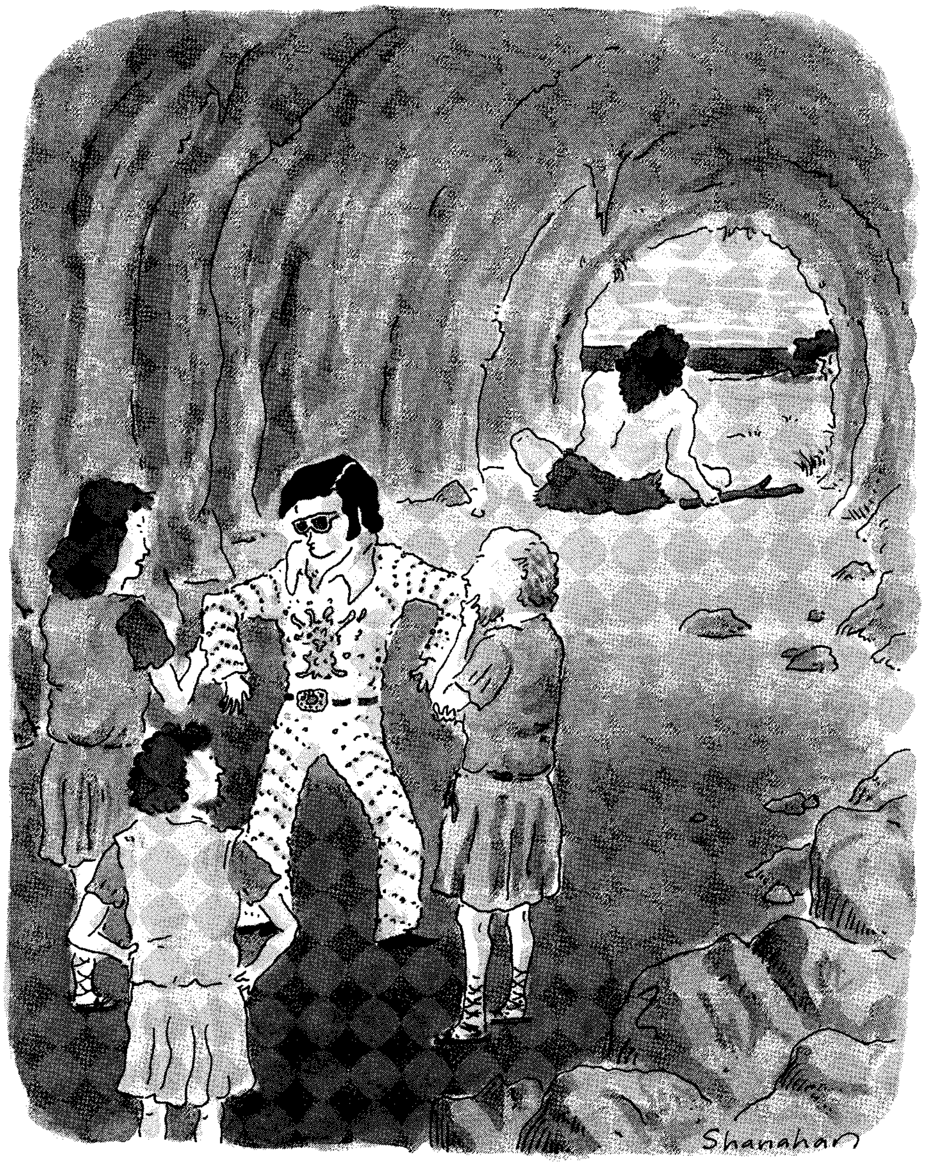
He went out into the high, cool lobby and crossed it several times, his heels clattering across the marble floors and his soles susurrant along the Persian carpets. He climbed a massive oak staircase to the mezzanine, where he passed through a pair of French doors that opened onto a long balcony overlooking a sparkling pool. Here he found Sheila, dropped in one corner of the terrace like a blown flower. She had taken the garland from her brow and was twirling it around and around in front of her face with the mopey fascination of a child. When she felt Ira's presence she turned, and, seeing him, broke out in a teary-eyed grin that he found very difficult to bear. He walked over to her and sat down beside her on the rough stucco deck of the balcony.

"Hi," he said.

"Are they all going nuts down there?"

"I guess. I heard about your dress. I'm really sorry."

"It's all right." She stared through the posts of the balustrade at the great red sun going down over Santa Monica. There had been a lot of rain the past few days, and the air was heartbreakingly clear. "You just feel like such a, I don't know, a big stupid puppet or something, getting pulled around."



*"If this doesn't distract him, Ulysses, we'll go with the sheep idea."*

• •

Ira edged a little closer to his cousin, and she laid her head against his shoulder and sighed. The contact of her body was so welcome and unsurprising that it frightened him, and he began to fidget with the vial in his pocket.

"What's that?" she said, at the faint rattle.

He withdrew the little bottle and held it up to the dying light. There was no label of any kind on its side.

"I sort of stole them from your friend Carmen."

Sheila managed an offhand smile.

"Oh—how did that work out? I saw you dancing."

"She wasn't for me," said Ira. He unscrewed the cap and tipped the vial into his hand. There were only two pills left: small, pink, shaped like commas—two little pink teardrops. "Any idea what these are? Could they be beta carotene?"

Sheila shook her head and extended one hand, palm upward. At first Ira thought she wanted him to place one of the pills upon it, but she shook her head; when he took her outstretched fingers in his she nodded.

"Ira," she said in the heaviest of voices, bringing her bridal mouth toward his. Just before he kissed her he closed his eyes, brought his own hand to his mouth, and swallowed, hard.

"My darling," he said.

—Michael Chabon

# A REPORTER AT LARGE

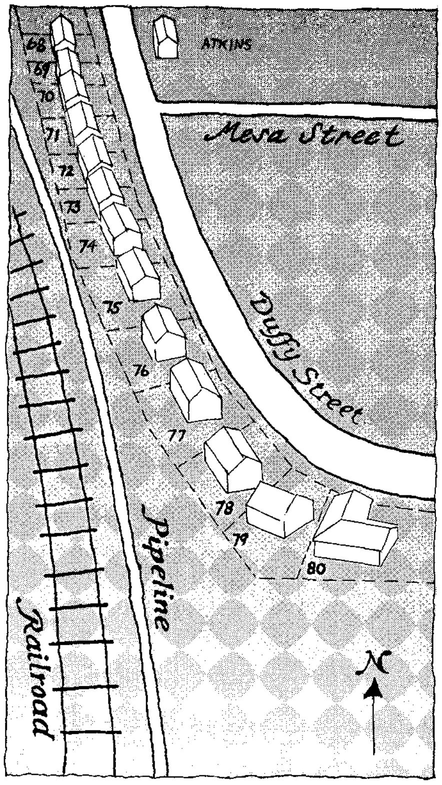
## DEVASTATION

THIS is a story about a disaster in a small residential neighborhood, a train derailment, followed by a period of intense activity such as disasters call out in all Americans, or nearly all: activity involving rescue, public observation, coöperation, mourning, sensationalism, and discovery, buried within which was a small thread of action having to do with a pipeline that ran along the eastern edge of the railroad right-of-way. The pipeline later ruptured, and its contents exploded in flame. Charles Batten, the chief of the Pipeline Division of the National Transportation Safety Board (N.T.S.B.), told me, "Release preceded ignition," which means that before the holocaust the contents of the pipeline—over three hundred thousand gallons of high-octane gasoline—were sprayed over the neighborhood, so that when ignition occurred the houses and automobiles of the residents who lived in its path, and their lawns, plantings, and trees as well, were wet with fuel and very ready to go up in flame.

The pipeline, which belongs to the Calnev Pipe Line Company, of San Bernardino, California, ruptured early in the morning on May 25th of last year, in Muscoy, a modest suburban neighborhood of San Bernardino. On the San Bernardino Police Department dispatcher log for May 25, 1989, the explosion has been logged in at 8:07 A.M. The note says, "Report of large boom and big smoke coming into air." At 8:11 A.M., the report says, "Unit C5 reports flames 200-300 feet in the air."

Here is a police detective's account of an interview he conducted with a resident of the neighborhood, Ruby Rona, on the subject of the events of that morning:

> Rona said that she was in her backyard between 0745-0800 on Thursday, 5-25-89, and had just noticed a white colored rain falling on the house behind hers on Duffy Street. She said she went inside her residence and shut the door. As soon as the door shut, she heard an explosion. She said right then all her windows blew in and there was fire all around her, and the house was on fire. She said everything was burning. She said that she went to the bedroom to get her husband, and both of them went outside.



Here is a detective's account of an interview he conducted with another resident, Nancy Fricks:

> Fricks said that she and her son, Daniel Sweeney, age 7 years, were inside their residence at approximately 0805 hours on Thursday, 5-25-89 when she saw water squirting into her backyard. She said that her house is on the north side of Donald Street and that she was looking out the back window looking north when she saw the water coming from the west. She told Sweeney that they were going outside to see where the water was coming from. She said as they walked down the hall, they heard a rumble like an earthquake and the whole house shook. She said all the windows blew out of the house and plants inside the house were on fire, then the whole house was in flames.

And here is the statement of another resident, Lesila Lousiale:

> I had left my room and was outside. The house was shaking and I saw a large white cloud rising up. . . . All at once a ball of fire passed the house. It was yellow in color. I knew that the pipeline exploded. I went back into the house and got everybody out. I got 10 people out of the house. We left and went east on Mesa. My son, Roy, was standing on the corner of our street waiting for the school bus. It's a good thing the bus was late because the children on the bus would have been killed.

And an account of an interview with another resident, Linda White:

> This 44-year-old female was at home in the front room when she heard the explosion. She opened the front door and felt intense heat that pushed her back. She saw the entire house light up and also saw the flames go over her house, ran east down Mesa about one half block, turned back, entered house to get car keys, then drove east about four houses, stopped, and helped her neighbor Darlene Thomas, who is disabled. She was quite upset, so she drove herself to San Bernardino Community Hospital for help. . . . She has lived in her home for twenty-two years and does not want to go back.

And with another resident, Clemmie Lee Williams:

> Williams said that he was outside across the street from his house on the east side of the street, waxing a car, when he heard a train go through. He said about 5 to 10 minutes later, he heard a rumble. He looked up toward his house and saw a cloud of flame about 4 houses wide come over the houses on the west side of the street. The flame was about 10 feet higher than the rooftops. He said on the initial blast it blew his hat off and he could feel the heat on his face.

I confess to two strong interests in reporting this story, one theoretical and general, the other practical and specific, and yet they seem to be the same. As for the theoretical interest, I have a conviction that we human beings are educated by Landscape, and I believe that every time we place a new device on the landscape—a railroad, for instance, or a pipeline—we are supposed to talk differently; that is, the world presents a new aesthetic pattern to the inner eye, and the new pattern must be reflected in speech and thought if the world is not to be a hopelessly confused place. As for the specific interest, it is in a family I met in reporting this story, the Atkins family—and a child of seven in that family named Jasmine Hunter.

THE *pipeline* belongs to our own time, and the experience of the Atkins family, of Duffy Street, in Muscoy, belongs, I think, to the pattern of the future that is emerging now, in which virtues (especially, perhaps, virtues of bravery and prescience) are preparing to face a dangerous and uncertain world. But the *railroad* continues to generate a nineteenth-century energy. The Southern Pacific line from which a freight train derailed into Muscoy runs from Mojave to Colton and falls officially in the Mojave subdivision of the railroad's Los Angeles division. It runs through the small boom city of Palmdale, where the Stealth bomber is being built, and through desert. Palmdale is a sight. Everywhere there are new real-estate developments, which look as much like the traditional sort of subdivision as a cellular phone looks like standard models. The houses are very close together, so the effect is more like Queens than like Scarsdale, but each community has very strong boundaries—one does not merge into another. In fact, these communities almost always have *walls*. They look like small walled cities in the desert. The houses often have the Spanish "touches" that are common in California, but the fact of their huddling so close together, and the high walls, and the desert landscape cause one to think of something Moorish. These communities do not seem to derive from the existing Southern California mission-Spanish tradition in architecture. Someone seems to have gone back to the gene pool and brought out a new strain.

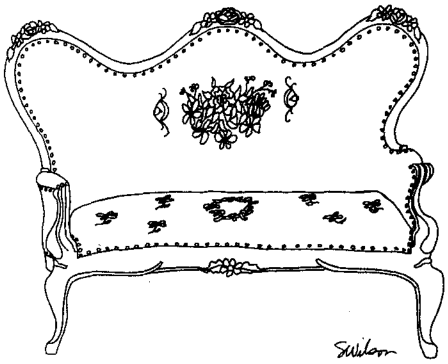
Mojave itself, which is where the Southern Pacific freight train that derailed in Muscoy set out from, is no such new thing. It is an old wall phone of a place. What a place! The railroad and California's Highway 14 run parallel and they go with great strength, like Olympic runners, and yet, just a hundred yards away, there are such sweet, dilapidated places—streets on which only a few cars a day move, a barbershop that closed without removing all its fixtures or closing its blinds, an old movie theatre that's shut up really tight. There are restaurants, bars, those new low-end motels which are clean, neat, and cheap, and the huge desert sky. From here one branch of the Mojave subdivision of the S.P. runs north and west to Bakersfield (which is where the crew of the freight that we are talking about came from), and another branch runs north from Mojave up the back side of the Sierra Nevada—up toward Lone Pine, for instance. From Lone Pine the freight that ended up all over Muscoy came down to a railroad siding near Mojave to be loaded into S.P.1-MJLBP-11, also called Extra 7551 East, which is the train we are talking about.

And Lone Pine! The road to Lone Pine is desolate and beautiful still, with the Sierra rising up on the west side of the road. I mean all at once.

South of Lone Pine is Owens Lake, a dry lake. And what Owens Lake is is one big deposit of sodium carbonate, a crystal that is known in the marketplace as trona. Of all the basic commercial things in the world, the mining of trona by the Lake Minerals Corporation, of Lone Pine, California, must be among the most basic. God has made the trona; the State of California grants leases to segments of the place where God has put it. You, Mr. Trona Man, dig it out of the lake bed, where it is right there waiting; dry it a little, getting the dampness out; and load it onto trucks, or onto railroad cars.

There's one hitch to the trona business: bulk. Trona is heavy, and you don't get anything for just a little bit of it. When people want trona, they want tons of it—hundreds and thousands of tons of it—perhaps for use in detergents.

So here, I'm saying, is the layout of the story—the combination of landscape and human activity from Lone Pine to Muscoy. In Muscoy there is a most complicated thing: a small human community nestled right next to a great nineteenth-century vector, the railroad, and a great twentieth-century vector, a pipeline carrying hazardous liquid. And is now a good time to mention that this pipeline delivers jet fuel to three Air Force bases in the desert—strange things, these bases out in the middle of nowhere—and almost all the gasoline used by the wonderful city of Las Vegas, Nevada? Calnev, the name of the pipeline company, stands for California-Nevada, of course—or, at least, one assumes that it does, since a boat called the Will-Su usually turns out to represent someone's children William and Susan. In any case, the railroad comes down from near Lone Pine, where a small company mines minerals out of a dry lake bed, to Mojave, the old railroad town, and Palmdale, where some sort of neo-suburb configuration has emerged around the defense industry, and then down through the desert to the community of Muscoy, where a freight derails.



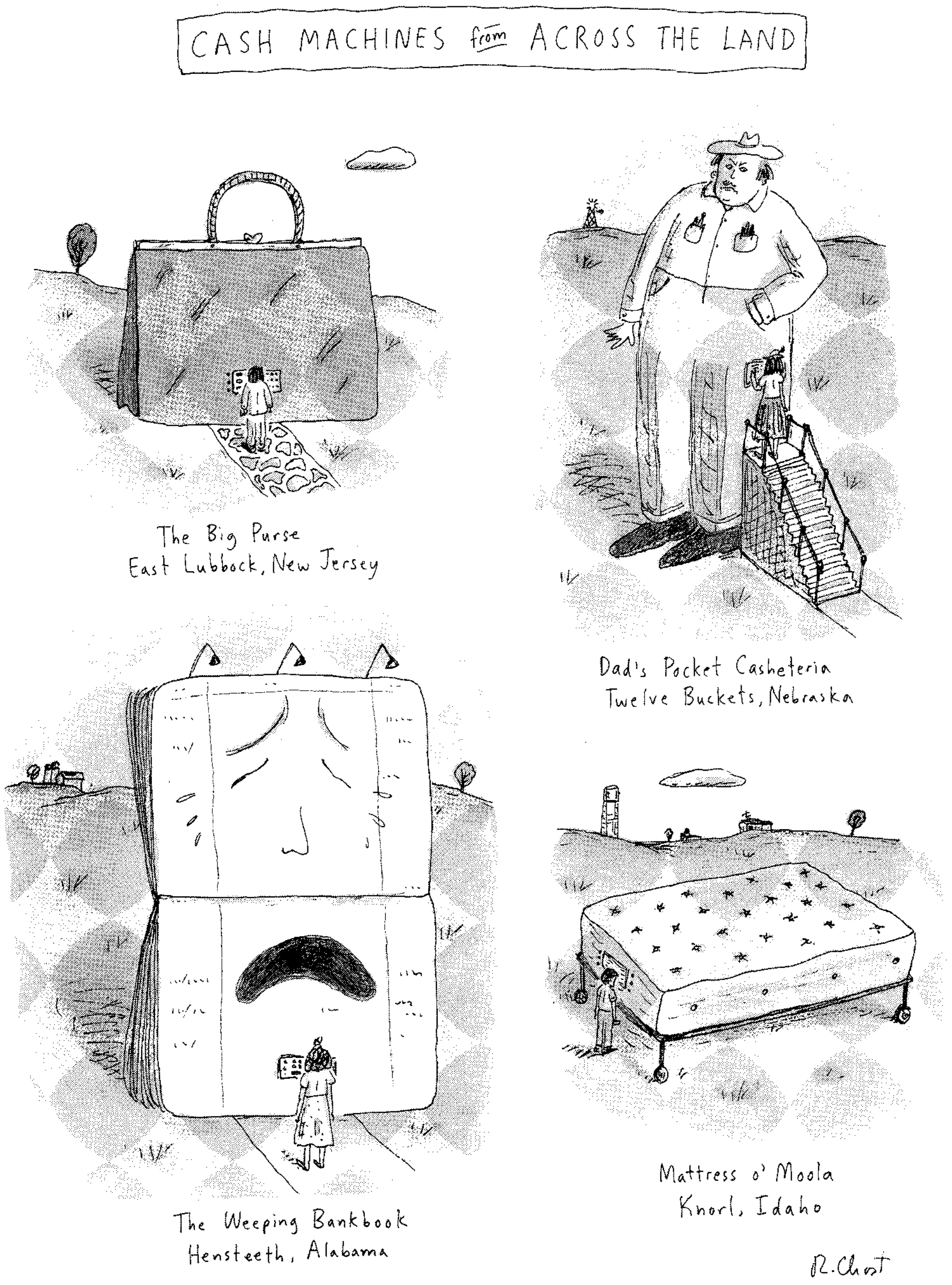
SUMMARY:

*On Friday, May 12, 1989, at about 7:37 A.M., Southern Pacific Freight Train 1-MJLBP-11, also called Southern Pacific Extra 7551 East, having lost control after cresting the Cajon Pass, in the mountains northeast of Los Angeles, ran away twenty miles down the mountainside until it reached Muscoy, where it left the tracks adjacent to the back yards of the residents of Duffy Street. Seven houses were destroyed, four houses were seriously damaged, two members of the Southern Pacific crew were killed, and so were two young boys, aged seven and nine, who lived at 2348 Duffy Street, a house that was completely destroyed. The derailed train consisted of four head locomotives, sixty-nine hopper cars, each loaded with a hundred tons of trona, and two "helper" locomotives.*

*Thirteen days later, on May 25th, at about 8:05 A.M., after an extensive—almost an amazingly extensive—and efficient cleanup-and-rescue operation in the Muscoy neighborhood, a fourteen-inch-outside-diameter pipeline ruptured, "released its product and ignited." In this second disastrous event, two people were killed and eleven houses were destroyed.*

THE surface of things is interesting. Of course it is. Going deep is often important, but understanding the surface of things is always important, too. So now, from the larger maps of Muscoy-Palmdale-Mojave–Owens Lake, we consider a smaller area: just the neighborhood of Muscoy, and not even that, just a few streets, and, right now, even less, just Duffy Street, and, most especially, Lots 72 through 79 on the west side of the street, near the railroad (and the pipeline).

I am looking at a picture taken of the Muscoy neighborhood shortly after the



derailment. In the top half of the picture one sees a typical small suburban subdivision (some of this will be incinerated when the pipeline ruptures and its "product" ignites); in the middle of the picture is Duffy Street. On what we will call the east side of Duffy Street (the direction is more like northeast), the houses are intact; on what we will call the west side of Duffy Street is a remarkable sight—dozens of freight cars scattered among ten or so houses. It is as though a god had hurled them there. The picture I am looking at is an aerial view. The existence of model railroads makes this photograph strange to look at, because that is what it looks like: a miniature world in which things have gone awry.

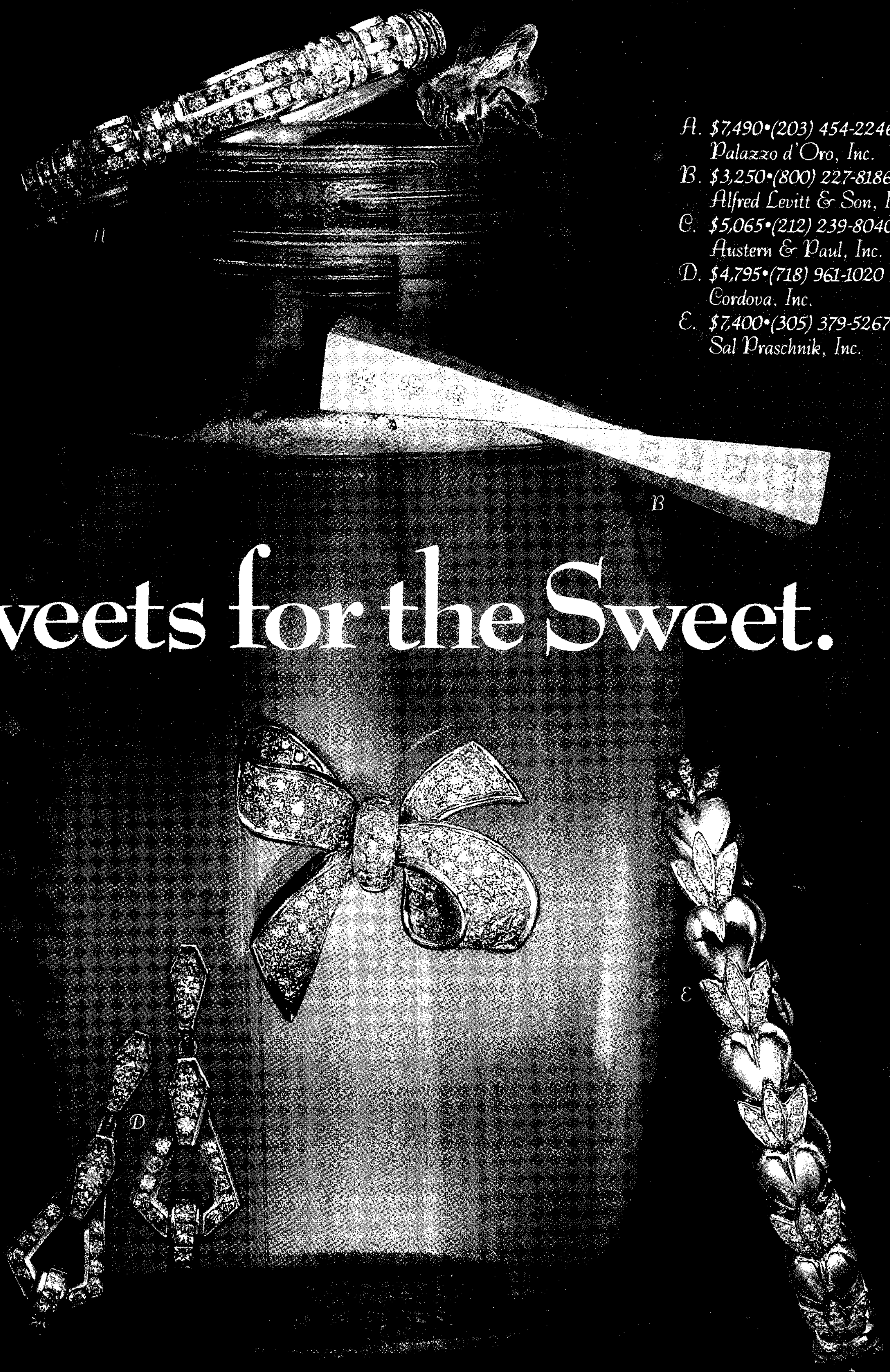
Now I am looking at two maps. One shows part of the big curve on which the train derailed; this represents a slightly larger area than is shown in the photograph. One sees the curve coming toward Duffy Street. The railroad does not run straight—and, indeed, Duffy Street itself is U-shaped. The bottom of the U runs very close to the track (and the pipeline) as the street and the track curve, so that on this map one sees them touching. On this map is marked a "theoretical point of derailment." Looking closely, one can make out lot numbers on Duffy Street. They are indistinct, but they are there.

I am looking at another map. I am looking for the point of rupture—where the pipeline exploded. I see it marked on the map at Lot 76. This was 2336 Duffy Street, which had been "99% destroyed" in the derailment. Four or five hopper cars were stacked on top of the house.

As to the derailment: this map, too, shows the railroad curve actually touching the private property of Duffy Street residents, at Lots 73 (the "theoretical point of derailment"), 74, and 75. I mean, just a look at the maps says, "The train left the track as it entered the curve; Duffy Street is laid out in such a way that it comes right into the beginning of the curve, the most dangerous point; the eight most vulnerable lots would be Lots 72 to 79." If, in addition to these maps, one has a photograph of the situation after the derailment, one may say, "Yes, just so, the locomotives left the rails at the top of the curve, sailed into the neighborhood for a little bit, and landed on Lots 78 and 79, pulling the freight cars behind them in such a way as to destroy that part of U-shaped Duffy Street which most closely touched the railroad curve."

IT is wonderful how railroad life continues to produce railroad men, and how railroad men speak about railroad life in a way that makes it palpable. Here is Larry J. Hill, locomotive engineer (he was running the helper locomotives on Extra 7551 East), talking before William C. Pugh, then investigator in charge of the Railroad Accident Division of the N.T.S.B., in the San Bernardino Room of the San Bernardino Hilton in May of last year, a few days after the derailment (more on Mr. Pugh later):

"I went to visit a friend of mine who works for Amtrak. And we discussed the hours of service laws you know to him. And then just general friendship talk. And I'm not sure of the exact time that I left. I think I left around 3:30 or 4:00 and I rented three videos and went home to watch those. And I think during one of those I went out to get something to eat. I'm a bachelor. And I very rarely eat at home. I always go out to eat. And I went to bed around midnight. And read until about 2:00 in the morning. And got up on Thursday morning at about 10:00 A.M. . . . And



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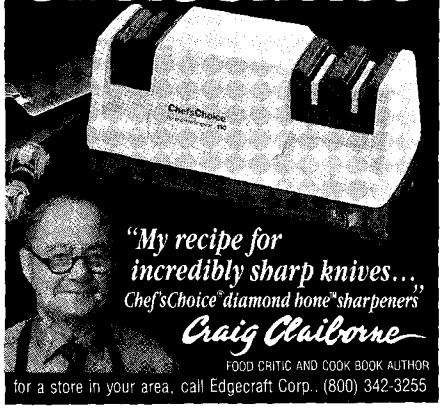

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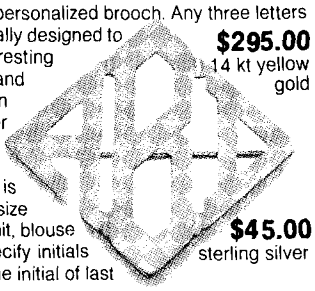

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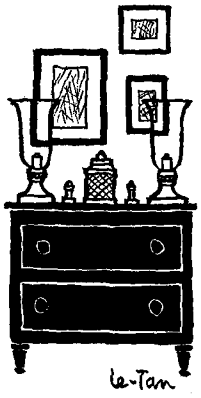
I got up and showered and I don't remember for sure I got a haircut that day. . . . At night I watched t.v. and at 11:30 I got a call. I just went to bed, just got under the covers at 11:30. And I got a call for a 1:30 A.M. on duty. And reported there at 1:30 . . . and probably about 1:50 we got in the carryall. . . .

"And at about 2:00 we departed for Dike [a stop in the Mojave subdivision] where we were supposed to take a relief, the helper engineer that was up there. And at approximately 2:30 we arrived at the Dike siding. We found the helper [locomotives] sitting at the siding. . . . We got out of the carryall. I talked to Mike Barnes, the engineer I was relieving. He gave me a description of the power. He told me the dynamics [braking system] on our trailing unit, I think it was the 8317. Yeah 8317 were in bad order.



"So I got up into the cab and got comfortable and proceeded to take the signal. We departed the Dike siding at my records show it was at 2:30 also because we were just there for a few minutes. And when we were leaving there Mike Barnes called on the carryall radio and said that my rear headlight was not working. I tried—I flipped it to bright and I could see it was working there but evidently it wasn't working on dim. So right after I crossed the road crossing which is just west of Dike I stopped, went back and tried to see what the problem was. And I couldn't get it to work. . . . So I just put an individual control and turned it on at the control stand back there. And it seemed to work on dim that way for some reason. I don't know why. And then I went back to the controlling unit and we proceeded again.

"And as far as I remember we had green signals all the way to Palmdale Number Two. And well I might also mention that upon starting out I checked the speedometer and several gauges because I at the first got a reading that showed the speedometer was way off and it was giving me a lower reading than it should be. . . . And then I checked it two more times and it showed right on. So it must have been a mile post or something that was off. And so I was satisfied the speedometer was reasonably accurate. . . .

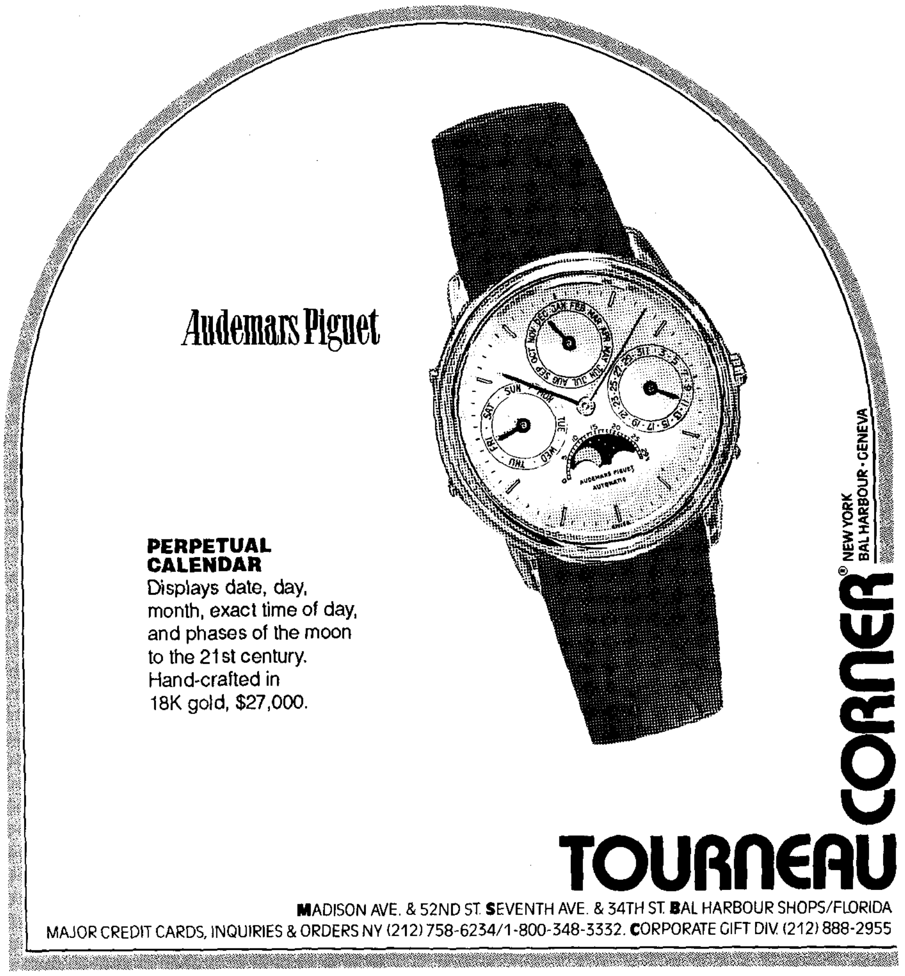
"And so I called the dispatcher and said something to the effect you know, what would you like me to do, we're here."

Mr. Hill and his two helper locomotives, one with good dynamic-braking capability and one with none at all, were told to couple onto the rear of a train on the main line at the Palmdale No. 2 station, which is south of Mojave, between Mojave and San Bernardino in the Mojave subdivision. Then they proceeded westward on this track about seventeen miles to the Oban station, where Extra 7551 East, with four lead locomotives and sixty-nine freight cars, was waiting for them. Mr. Hill continues:

"I would say it would probably have had to have been 5:30 or so 5:25 that we departed. . . . And we proceeded until . . . we crested the hill [atop the Cajon Pass]. And as we were approaching the top, the speed limit dropped. . . . I was throttling down probably prior to hitting the west switch Hiland . . . and worked into dynamics [the dynamic-braking system—one of the two principal braking systems on a freight train; air brakes are the other]. And somewhere after he crested the hill he called me and asked me if I was in dynamics. And I said I was in full or I think I said I was in full. I don't remember exactly what I said. But I talked to him there and said I was in full dynamics. And the speed limit or the speed did get up a little high coming through; we were out of Hiland when we crested the hill. And he increased the set [of the air brakes] and got the speed back down to thirty or thereabouts. And I relaxed. You know you're more alert you know when you're changing status. Cresting the hill you're alert for any kind of vibration or change in the slack or you're more alert to the radio listening into what's going on and also watching your gauges. Because you don't want to do anything that will—I'll use the word mess up the road engineer on the head end that will go against what he's trying to do to control the train.

"The train was back and stabilized at the speed limit, thirty miles an hour. And you know I relaxed a little bit then because the crisis was over you know cresting the hill and balancing the grade. And just started just rolling the train. He did have heavy set [of air braking] under it. As I remember it was eighteen pounds set on the brakes. So I was exceptionally cautious or aware of smoking brakes. . . . And everything was smooth. Like I say I—with the heavy set I expected a lot of smoking brakes and possible fire. So I was rolling the train carefully to observe any fire. Maybe we'd drop some fire or something on the right-of-way. And I was surprised how little smoke we did have on the train. By then it was fairly bright out and, or, you know, daylight was there. And the next thing—I think it was somewhere around Canyon [another stop in the Mojave subdivision] or out of Canyon—the brake or the speed started picking up. . . . I don't remember the exact settings. I got the impression he was increasing it in steps. . . . My impression was that he did it in like two pound increments, increased.

"And we had gotten up to full service and the speed was like forty miles an hour and . . . I was quite frankly getting mad because I didn't—because he—it appeared we were speeding and I didn't want to. . . . And at forty-five I finally had enough and I put the train in emergency. And at first the speed dropped. We dropped about two, one or two miles an hour. And then it started creeping up again. . . . And the speed started coming up like I said again after we put it in emergency. And I knew we were ahead then. And we got up to around fifty and then I heard the road engineer call West Colton. I believe it was AGYM [Assistant General Yard Master], to inform them that we had a problem. And I don't remember his exact words but it was something like—his voice was calm—he said, we had a problem. And at that point I felt his message did not convey the seriousness of what was coming down on the side of the hill. So I got on there and I called 'Mayday, Mayday' to clear the radio waves. And I told them we had a—I don't remember the exact words—we had a serious problem. We had a runaway on the hill. I don't think I told them where we were. I don't remember. And at various points I remember when we were approaching Dike real close I was concerned about the road crossing because I figured at the speed we were going which I think was somewhere around fifty-five, at that time the gates would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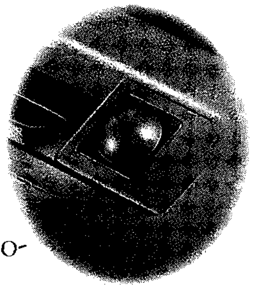

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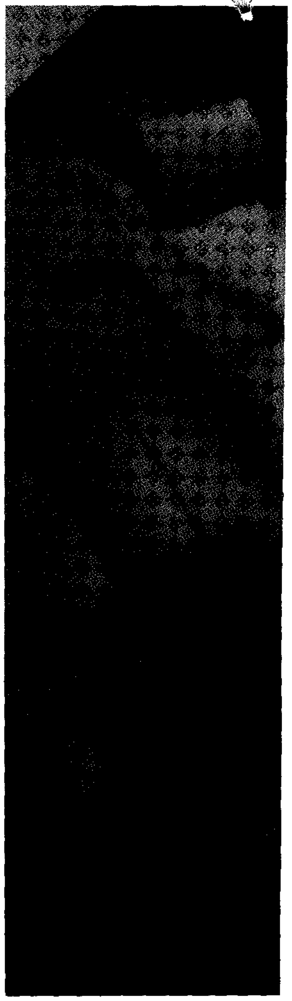

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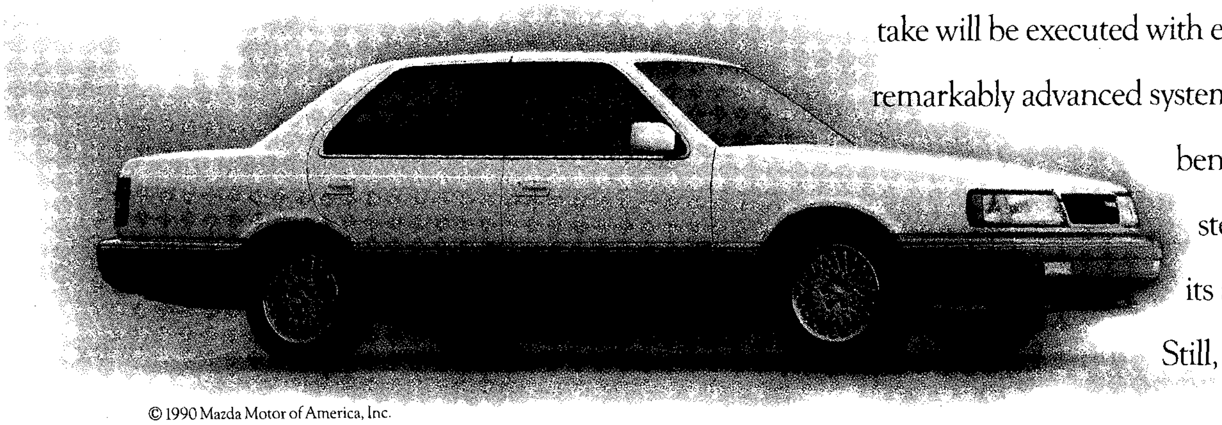

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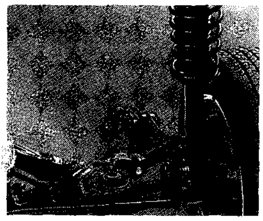

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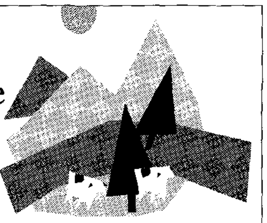
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probably not come down in time. And it was shortly thereafter that we just prepared for the derailment, the crash or whatever. I got down on the floor behind the control stand, braced my back against the back panel and my head against the panel, my feet up against the control stand. I had the radio in my hand. I was calling out the speeds to the brakeman as we were increasing. And I did make some other attempts to call somebody or to talk to somebody on the radio. I don't remember exactly what I said or where I said it. I remember calling out the speed when we hit ninety. And then I remember after the derailment I called and I said we were on the ground. And that's about it."

HERE is another railroad man—Frank Holland, the head-locomotive engineer of Extra 7551 East—replying to questions from Daniel Raskin, of the Human Performance Group of the N.T.S.B.:

Holland: We got to Hiland and everything seemed to be fine. We hadn't had any problem with the train at all, nothing that would indicate surely that there was something wrong. I tipped over the top of Hiland five miles under what we had calculated from our graph what the speed should have been. So we came over there—

Raskin: What speed were you doing?

Holland: We had figured with the dynamics we had and the tons per operative brake and everything, that we could do 30 down the hill, that's what we had calculated, 30 miles per hour was what we were allowed. Well like I said I topped over Hiland about 25 which I always try to do a little under, I try to brake up to the speed. So we came over Hiland was doing fine, we put an initial set in it and I could feel the train coming over, you know, it comes down on top of you a little bit more as it comes around the curve there at Hiland. It was starting to run on me a little bit, I gave it some more dynamics trying to get it to settle down a little bit. I called the helper, I said do I have all your dynamics. At that point he told me you will have in just a minute assuming that he had gone to run 8 dynamics in his power, he didn't tell me anything else, that was all. At that point it was starting to pick up a little on me, meaning that it might have gotten a little bit over 30 at that point. I put some more air into it and made an additional set which was what I mean by putting air into it. And the train settled down and on the curves it handled fine. As the train was coming down the hill the binding of the train in the curves I had no problem handling it at all. I anticipated no problem. As we came down further, and as you're coming down Canyon there are a few places there where it will run on you, meaning that it's less curvy and so what you had holding the train back in the curves—you no longer had that resistance of the curves so the train will pick up a little speed, but I was compensating fine. The train was handling fine. And as we came on down we started to get into the straights, the straight track, and it started to pick up on me. . . . And from that point it never slowed down, it only continued to pick up momentum until we came to the curve at the bottom of Dike. . . .

Raskin: Do you know what speed you actually obtained on the way down through there?

Holland: I believe we were doing at least 100 miles an hour. The speedometer only went to 80, but it was way past that. I mean it was as far as it could go. . . . I told him, Everett [the conductor], this train's not slowing down man. And you know he says, well do what you can, you know, do what you can, do what you have to.

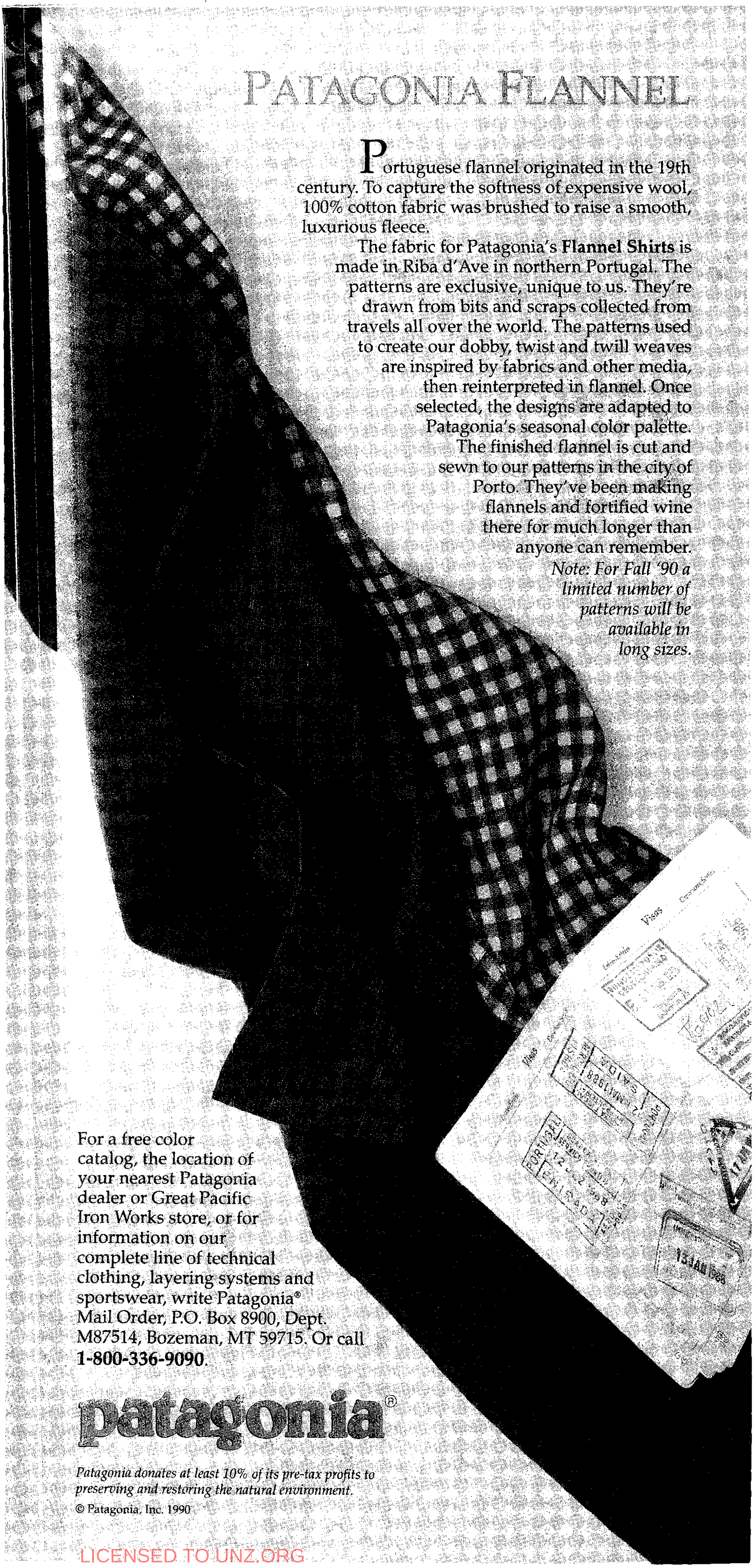
Raskin: Is there anything else that you can think of right now that might assist us in our investigation?

Holland: We might look into the fact that maybe those cars were heavier than what they were supposed to be. . . . I said that from the weight of that train on that profile to the number of cars we had to the tons per operative brake, I didn't see how that train could be that light. I don't know, I didn't question it, I never had any reason to question it before. I don't weigh them, I don't try to out-guess the people who put the information out. All I can do is assume that this information is correct. I don't want to kill anybody. I don't want to die myself. But if it's not correct I can't operate and make decisions to handle a train like that unless I have the correct information. If I know what's going on.

THE two factors most under question during the time I was writing this piece were the braking capacity of the locomotives and the weight of the cargo—trona, dried lake bottom, sixty-nine hundred tons of it.

The head-end engineer, Mr. Holland, had been told he was pulling a train that weighed about sixty-one hundred tons. In fact, the real trailing tonnage (the weight of the cargo plus the weight of the cars) was closer to nine thousand tons. He also thought that, of the six locomotives he had on his train (four in front and two in the rear), four had full dynamic-braking capacity ("dynamic braking" has been explained to me by Mr. Pugh, of the N.T.S.B., as something like putting your car in gear to brake while going down a hill), one had "intermittent" braking capacity, while the remaining unit was completely without dynamics. The fact is, however, that Larry Hill —of the helper locomotives in the rear —failed to tell him what the engineer he relieved at the Dike station had told *him:* that Engine 8317 of the helper had no dynamic-braking capacity. And another fact. The N.T.S.B. investigation showed that Mr. Holland's third locomotive (which he thought had good dynamic brakes) had only partial braking, or perhaps none at all, so that out of six locomotives, Extra 5771 East had only two with fully reliable dynamic brakes.

And the trona. If the cargo had come from almost anywhere else, Albert Hale, an assistant chief dispatcher of the Southern Pacific Transportation Corporation, has said, it would have been accurately weighed, and the accurate weight correctly entered in the S.P.'s computer in Los Angeles. But, as it was, the shipper, Lake Minerals Corporation, of Lone Pine, California, was new at shipping by rail, was operating from an obscure town, and was using an improvised setup to get its cargo to the docks. And yet the man in charge of shipping, William McClung, was careful. This was his second shipment of trona, not his first. The first time, he had shipped too little, and the ship carrying the trona to Colombia had left somewhat light. This second time, he was determined to get exactly the right weight—not too much, because if there should be extra trona sitting at the dockside he would have to do something with it, maybe truck it back to Owens Lake. (That's what happened to the trona that was dumped into the little neighborhood of Muscoy, by the way;



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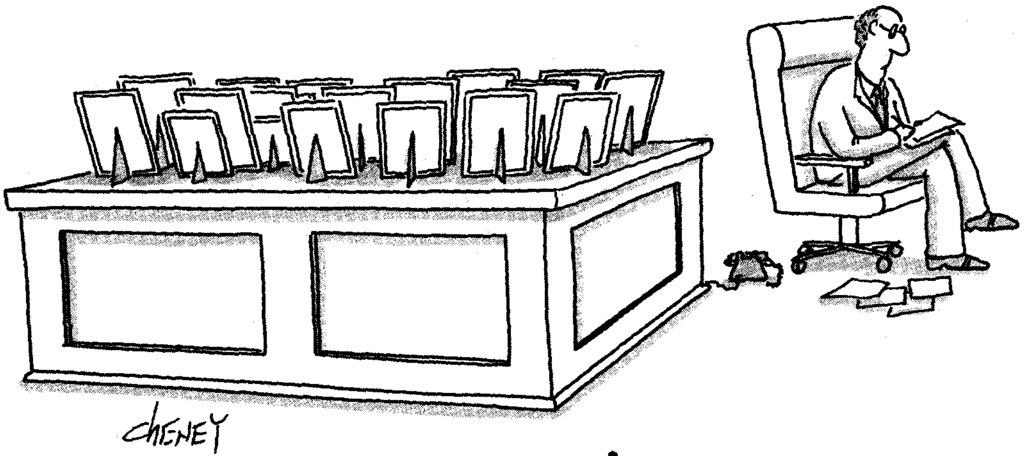

it was scooped up and trucked back to Owens Lake.)

So Mr. McClung, of the Lake Minerals Corporation, carefully arranged to weigh the trona being loaded into the big freight cars at a railroad siding in Rosamond, near Mojave. He hired a company that had a front-end-loader with a weighing device. He then had a truckload weighed and reweighed, using this loader with a weighing device, and each time he measured a truckload it came out the same, so he was sure he had loaded a hundred tons into each freight car.

Now, at Rosamond, the siding is only so long; you can't handle as many cars as this big trona shipment was going to take, so Mr. McClung's trona was handled in three different batches—one batch of thirty-two cars, a second batch of fifteen cars, and a third batch of twenty-two. Each of these different batches was handled by a different Southern Pacific yard clerk. In order to release a group of freight cars, you have to enter a weight for the cars you are handling into the Southern Pacific computer. I must say that "red tape" does not begin to describe the postcolonial situation we are about to encounter here, and the computer part just makes it stranger. In any case, to begin with, each yard clerk entered a different estimate of what the trona in each car weighed. Yard Clerk No. 1 estimated that each car carried fifty tons of trona. Yard Clerk No. 2 said his trona weighed seventy-five tons a car, and Yard Clerk No. 3 said that each car carried sixty tons. All three weights were guesses. The yard clerks didn't feel bad about guessing because they thought the weight they put in would be superseded by the Southern Pacific rate clerk in Los Angeles when that gentleman got the shipper's bill of lading, which would have the correct weight as supplied by the shipper, Mr. McClung. Remember: Mr. McClung, the shipper, has taken great pains to load each car with exactly one hundred tons of trona; but since that is the amount he has paid for, he doesn't know he has to tell anybody he has done this.

Now, what we are talking about so far is the car file of the Southern Pacific computer. It was the figures from the car file of Extra 7551 East (composed of three wildly different, inaccurate guesses) that ended up in the hands of the train's engineer. As Engineer Holland said, "I didn't see how that train could be that light." He also said, "I don't try to out-guess the people who put the information out."

The bill of lading in this case was the responsibility of the shipping clerk in Mojave. As it happened, Mr. McClung had occasion to sit and talk with the Mojave shipping clerk as they filled out and signed the form, but the subject of the weight of the cars didn't come up. Later, when it came time for the shipping clerk to fax the bill of lading to the rate clerk in Los Angeles, he suddenly realized that he needed the weights—but by then, Mr. McClung had gone, and the shipping clerk couldn't find his phone number. And instead of calling directory assistance in Lone Pine, he did just what the three yard clerks before him had done: he took a guess—one hundred and twenty thousand pounds per car, or sixty tons—which happened to be the same as the guess taken by Yard Clerk No. 3, although they certainly didn't confer about it. So one has inaccurate guesses by the yard clerks and a bill of lading with another guess. And now we come to the rate clerk.

RATE CLERK: My title and my job is considered rate clerk. What I do is I normally Monday through Friday I code up all the information for the billers who actually do the weigh billing and put it in the computer system the shipping orders that the different shippers submit to us. This particular Saturday that I worked the job it's a job where I work by myself. And I write up all the information that's on the shipping order. And then what I do is I eventually enter this in the computer. . . .

Okay. As of next month I will be working for Southern Pacific for twenty years. I would say eighty per cent of that time I've spent doing what I'm doing right now. I've been involved strictly with the billing part of it and with the shipping orders. . . . I normally work Monday through Friday. And we, I've never dealt with this company before. This is the first time that I've run across a shipment like this. And this particular job that I work on Saturday and Sunday I'm filling in on overtime. I was filling in Saturday and Sunday. So I've been working seven days a week. . . .

WILLIAM MEEKER [of the N.T.S.B.]: Okay. So on the consist in question here how did you know what weight to enter for that commodity?

RATE CLERK: What I—well the shipper had on the shipper note that was faxed to us had listed a weight of 129,000 pounds, 120,000 pounds per car. Now, when I did total up the shipments there were 69 cars. So I got a grand total weight of—I did make an error on that, yes. What I did was when I calculated the total weight on the cars I had put 129,000. Instead of hitting the zero I hit a nine. So I actually made the weights heavier than what was submitted on the shipping order. So what they had submitted was 120,000 pounds per car. I actually entered it as 129,000 pounds per car. . . . Now if a shipper does not list the weight on a commodity where we need a weight I, we, normally try to contact the shipper and get the actual weight of the shipment. An example of this would be your mechanical reefer cars where you have a perishable shipment.

We have to have a weight on that.

Meeker: Okay. In this case—

Rate Clerk: In this case the weight was already listed on the shipping order.

Here is a good thing that did happen—but it did not make a difference. After all this mess of guess weights, wrong estimates, missed connections, lack of communication, and wrong keys hit on the computer, a man, almost like an angel, steps into the procedure and pierces the layers of error. This is Mr. Hale, the assistant train dispatcher at Colton, whose job it was to assign locomotives to Extra 7551 East which would be sufficiently powerful to haul it. Mr. Hale looked at the transfer information from the man he relieved and said to himself, "Sixty-nine cars of trona, that would be a hundred and thirty tons a car—what does that equal?—we'll need locomotive power enough to pull *that* weight." And then he set about arranging for that amount of power, which involved his calling for the helper—Mr. Hill's unit of two locomotives on the back of the train. He didn't look at any of the computer files at all. He didn't need to, because early in his career Mr. Hale had handled freight cars of trona. Unlike the rate clerk, he knew all about it. Not trona from Lone Pine but Trona from a town called Trona, where there is an operation bigger than the one at Lone Pine. Cars coming out of *there*, Mr. Hale happened to remember, weighed a hundred and thirty tons—a hundred tons of cargo, thirty tons for the car. Everything should have been fine. But Mr. Hale didn't know that one of the two helper locomotives he assigned to Extra 7551 East hadn't any dynamic braking.

If you are looking for the old-timer in this story, look no further: meet William Pugh, who has recently been made chief of the Railroad Division of the National Transportation Safety Board. Mr. Pugh, now sixty-two years old, was (by his own description) just a poor boy living in Baltimore, which is, of course, a railroad town. He worked on the railroad from the age of seventeen, and in time he rose to be the head of the Car Maintenance Department of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which is quite a rise. As head of maintenance, he was in charge of all the locomotives and all the other equipment that moved along the rails (though not of the rails themselves), and that is a big job on any big railroad. He was schooled in the Old School, and lived through the decline of the Old School: he worked for the ill-fated Penn Central combine for a while, then left that mess to become the head of the Mechanical Department of the Chicago & North Western. While he was at the North Western, there was an accident at Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and in the context of that accident Mr. Pugh met some people from the N.T.S.B., including a man named Elmer Garner, with whom he had worked many years before on the Pennsylvania. Garner asked Mr. Pugh to come to Washington, and he did.

Mr. Pugh looks as if he could go back in a time machine and work on a railroad circa 1900 without experiencing any discomfort. On the other hand, he is up to date. I visited Mr. Pugh in his office in Washington and asked him about runaway trains. He said that in terms of devastation—of damage to life and property—the accident in San Bernardino was the biggest he had ever seen.

I asked Mr. Pugh about other railroad accidents involving runaway trains. I said that a runaway train seemed to me almost like a nineteenth-century thing—something old-fashioned.

"Subsequent to the San Bernardino derailment, unfortunately, they've had two more out there at San Bernardino. But not resulting in accidents. They had two runaways subsequent to the one we were out there on."

"Not on that track from the Cajon Pass?"

"Yes. Over to Cajon Pass, right."

I expressed surprise. The Cajon Pass is at the top of the mountain, at Hiland. ("Cajon" is commonly pronounced "Cahone.")

"They were able to get them stopped, fortunately," Mr. Pugh said.

"Had they not stopped they would have ended up in that same kind of situation?"

"Well, they could have ended up in that same kind of situation. . . . They wouldn't have made that curve down there, probably the same as this fella didn't. . . . As to Engineer Holland, our computer simulations indicate that after he left the compound curves up top it doesn't look like he'd have been able to get it stopped. . . . He was going to go off that curve at Muscoy; over-

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turning speed at that curve is somewhere like about fifty-five miles an hour, and, of course, he was up well over that, in the hundred to hundred and four miles an hour, maybe as high as a hundred and seven miles an hour. . . . There was a series of real errors made in this accident, and, of course, that's like any accident—there's some mistakes that are made. Here we had a gross overweight from what the engineer understood; we had equipment that wasn't functioning—we had locomotives that didn't have dynamic braking that nobody knew about."

Mr. Pugh took us to his outer office and showed us two big aerial photographs of the Muscoy neighborhood—one taken after the derailment, the other after the pipeline explosion. He got them from behind a couch, and spread them out on a table. His actions were deliberate and simple. He was a man at ease.

"How do you live with all this death and destruction?" I asked.

He didn't answer that one. The photographs, blown up to four feet by six feet, looked like battlefield shots—the First World War, maybe.

I turned to him. "On the Pennsylvania Railroad, in 1949, would there have been someone keeping better track of the situation than we had here?"

He took a minute's thought and said, "I think rail management as a whole has scaled back over the years, but you'd have to look at it in its total: they've introduced more efficiency within the system, which allows them to have less management people. In the old days, in 1949, practically every car was weighed. There were scales all over the place; you had scale cars that went testing them. Now you have a lot of weigh-in-motion scales. . . . You have one in Colton Yard, but he never made Colton Yard. In a weigh-in-motion scale, an engine pulls the cars across the scale—very expensive, very sophisticated. So a lot of the bulk shipments now—coal, everything—are weighed that way. But not at the *mine*—not until they get to some major yard somewhere along the line. Mojave is not a major yard."

To get to the big aerial photographs, Mr. Pugh had to pull his couch around and fiddle with his office door, which, it turned out, was held by a piece of broken rail, used as a doorstop.

"Oh, yeah," he said, looking at the piece of broken rail. "That caused *this*." He pointed to a photograph on the wall. "That one was in Kentucky, just three miles down the road from Franklin." He pointed to a group of derailed tanker cars. "That's hydrocyanic acid; that's the same thing they use in the death chamber. If they'da broke open, it would have been a major catastrophe."

"But they didn't."

"They didn't."

I SPENT some time looking at a map which shows the route of the Calnev pipeline from Colton Terminal through the Muscoy neighborhood to Las Vegas, Nevada. Another document in the case. And here is one more character—the city attorney of San Bernardino, Jim Penman. According to one newspaper account, Mr. Penman said in August, 1989, that a Calnev Pipe Line official said to him that the neighborhood of Muscoy was not of great importance next to the larger consideration of moving gasoline to Las Vegas. Calnev denies this. But, according to officials at the National Transportation Safety Board, in Washington, it is true that political officials representing Nevada called Calnev a day or two after the derailment and made it plain to Calnev that it was not an acceptable idea for the pipeline to remain shut down for any length of time.

The pipeline was reopened quickly—about four days after the Southern Pacific train derailed on top of it. What a mess! When the train left the tracks, the front locomotives landed on Lots 78 and 79, and dragged freight cars full of dried-lake-bottom mineral with them. The freight cars spilled the trona all over the place; the route of the pipeline was covered with this trona, and in one spot, estimated to be in the vicinity of Lots 77 and 78, near the point at which the pipeline later ruptured, a locomotive lay on top of the pipeline.

What a scene! As I said, there can be no doubt that this country is well set up when it comes to rescue operations. All accounts of the post-derailment period show an amazing ability to coördinate the work of getting people out of the neighborhood, of rescuing people stuck in debris, of setting up command posts, and so forth. Great machines were brought in, and the train wreckage was removed. This job presented something of a problem, because the wreckage lay

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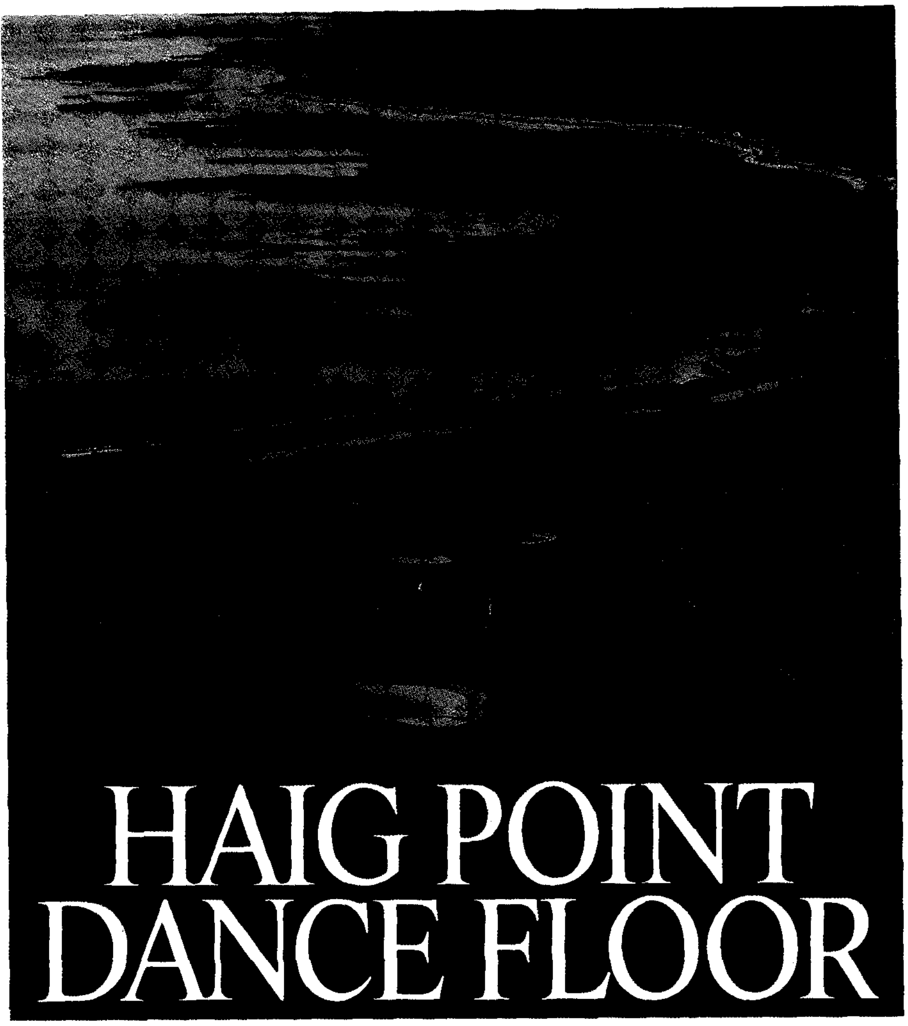
near and on the pipeline. People were aware of the pipeline at the time, of course; in fact, a California state official whose job it was to act for the Office of Pipeline Safety during this phase visited the site, and in the course of his visit he informed the people coördinating the work that there had been an incident the year before in Montclair, only twenty miles from San Bernardino, in which a pipeline ruptured after a train derailed onto it. And, of course, Calnev was aware that a pipeline is at special risk at any sites where the pipeline shares a right-of-way with a railroad; in fact, Calnev's emergency-procedures manual makes the risks quite clear, and spells out just where along the route from Colton to Las Vegas the pipeline does share a right-of-way with a railroad.

Which brings us back to the map of the pipeline route. I am looking at it now. Here the pipeline passes just around the small neighborhood of Muscoy; now it goes up the mountains to the Cajon Pass, through the desert to Clark County, and, all of a sudden, printed right on the map—which isn't a tourist-type thing but a detailed, grid-and-infrastructure-type thing—funny little mottoes and maxims begin to show up. "The darkest day in life is when we expect something for nothing" is one. "Land is the basis of wealth. See NEVADA first" is another. And it is impossible not to include "There is nothing wrong with striking out as long as you strike out—swinging." As I look at the document it seems to me that I am looking at a divided brain. One half of the brain is making a physical world; the other half is striving to compete with its counterpart—in spiritedness, at least—by egging it on to make still *more*, not to flag in energy, and so forth. In this half, alas, all functions are dead or moribund, except the cheerleading function. And there is something morbid about the cheerleader—that business about "strike out—swinging."

Here are some facts: The railroad system in this country is huge. The National Transportation Safety Board is tiny. The system of hazardous-liquid pipelines in this country is huge. The Office of Pipeline Safety is tiny.

These facts would not present a problem if there were not such a big gap between the delicacy and elaborateness of the infrastructure we depend on and the tiny—almost minuscule—wis-



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dom systems by which, in theory, the infrastructure is controlled. The rituals by which things are *made* continue, and some of our best people devote their lives to seeing that these rituals are not in any way impeded, but the rituals by which we acknowledge what we *have* made have faltered and almost come to a halt. "Oh, well, but," you might say, "it's certainly unfair to judge by folky little things put on a pipeline map." But I would say that those folky sayings are the *best* we ever get. In general, we celebrate the person with enough gumption to put some of what he believes on a map of the infrastructure—even if it looks, from one point of view, like graffiti on a tomb. In general, the map *is* the wisdom system. That is what the Calnev official meant when he said (if we take Mr. Penman's quotation of him as fact) that a neighborhood like Muscoy doesn't matter: there is no service other than the service of the map.

I learned quite a bit about the scale of things in America while I was reporting this story. We are set up to build. And we are set up to respond to disaster. What we are willing to do to forestall disaster is: very little.

I HAVE a mental picture of me sitting in the office of George Tenley, at the Office of Pipeline Safety, in Washington. Mr. Tenley is different from Mr. Pugh: for instance, not an old hand. I was asking him about the period of thirteen days between the train derailment and the rupture of the pipeline and, specifically, about a very short period, of about eighteen hours, on May 15th and 16th (a "window" between the moment when the last locomotive was removed and the moment when the Southern Pacific Railroad crews were scheduled to collect the spilled trona), during which a very small crew of men plowed through several feet of trona and then dug down to the pipeline to see if it was safe to restart it and get the gasoline moving to Las Vegas again. I asked whether eighteen hours (part of which was spent working around the S.P. crew that was hauling away pieces of wrecked house) was enough time to get this testing work done, and whether the Southern Pacific cleanup schedule should have been the determining factor in allotting the number of hours for this work.

Mr. Tenley replied, "Well, we don't put any hours on when someone makes that judgment. I mean, the pipeline is there to move energy, and a lot of this is based on demand—they've got to keep that line going, got to meet the demand in Las Vegas. If eighteen hours in a given case is too short, then they've messed up. If it isn't, and the investigation shows that it was an appropriate time and they had the wherewithal, they had the necessary facts, they asked the right questions, they looked at the right issues, then eighteen hours could be enough. It's very subjective."

I said, "But here you have subjective factors that are all in favor of spending more time and being more cautious, because you had all this equipment running on top of the pipeline—and, you know, extraordinary circumstances. It wasn't as if the train had toppled over in the other direction from the pipeline; it toppled over *onto* the pipeline. And the houses were so close. Let me be a kind of antagonistic layman—I mean, just looking at the facts of it, the number of resources involved. You've got a sixty-nine-car train, you've got houses down, two kids dead, you've got equipment from all over, including two one-hundred-ton-capacity cranes, and, when it comes to the inspection of the pipeline during the critical hours, you've got two guys and a supervisor there for less than a day, and they don't dig it all up, not at all. It doesn't seem in proportion. I want to ask you again about those two guys in that amount of time—if that doesn't strike you as out-of-proportion small. Just the decision to *partly* inspect it, and not rip the thing open and have a look at it. I mean, why, when we're doing all this other stuff on a huge scale, would anyone suddenly make a small effort in this department?"

William Gute, also of the Office of Pipeline Safety, and also at this meeting, responded. He said, "We've looked at it, and they had—believe it or not—a train derailment in Nevada within a few weeks after this one, and we told them they had to expose the entire pipe. . . . We, as a matter of instruction to our regional offices, have told them that if you have a train fall on top of a pipeline we want it to be exposed, and so on, and further inspected. That is a result of our looking at the San Bernardino accident."

"It's a learned lesson, if you will," Mr. Tenley said.

Just a short time later, Mr. Tenley

said, "The bottom line for us was, What is Calnev gonna do before they want to attempt to put that line back in service? We want to control that. We did control that. We did impose those obligations on them."

These statements confused me, because, of course, the Office of Pipeline Safety had imposed no obligations on Calnev during the eighteen-hour period of inspection we had been discussing.

"What obligations did you impose on them?" I asked.

"We told them to replace the pipe, we told them to change the valves—all kinds of things," Mr. Tenley said.

"But that's *after the fire*," I said, a little incredulous, and then I realized that the period between the derailment and the explosion had disappeared from our conversation.

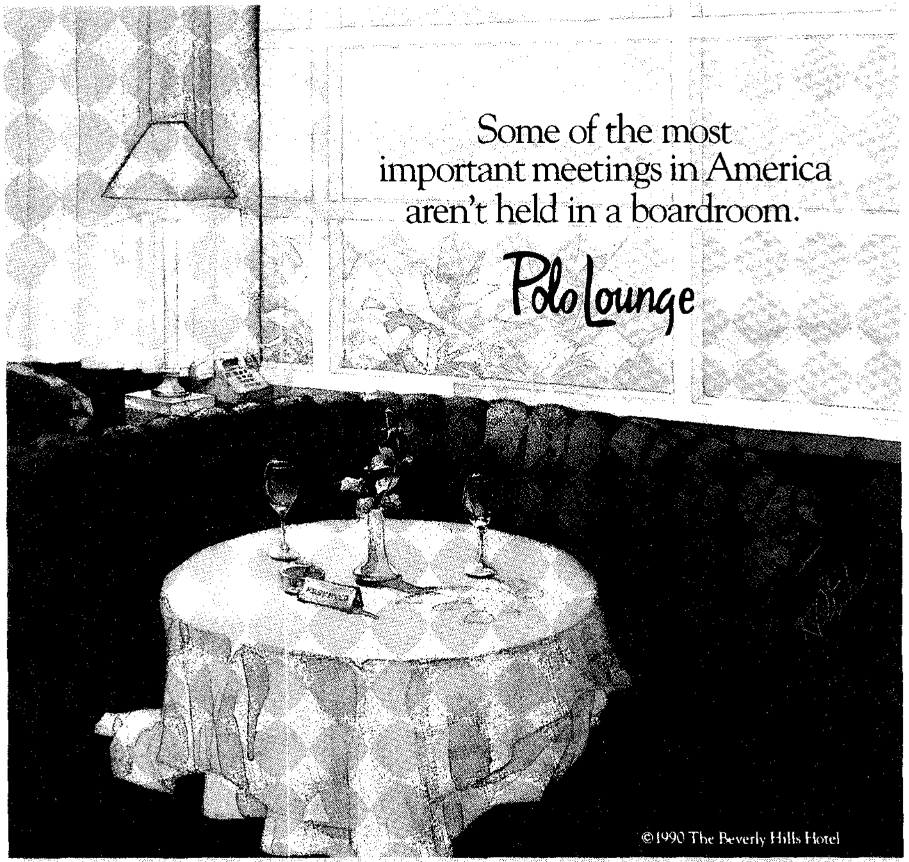
"Where are we in the over-all pipeline picture in America now?" I asked. "I mean, you have some aging pipelines. Here's an issue: We have a much less secure country than we had when those pipelines were built. In the sense of, uh—well, uh, we're kind of a lawless society now. Right?"

"Yeah," Mr. Tenley said. "If someone were to go in and, for whatever reason—"

"It has not been a problem," Mr. Gute said. "I would hope that you wouldn't—I would think it counterproductive to safety to plant a seed in people's minds that 'Hey, this might be a mode of doing damage.' "

I said nothing for a moment. It *is* an issue, what one agrees to discuss. But not discussing the real danger implicit in the juxtaposition of a railroad curve, a small residential community, and a buried pipeline resulted in the devastation in Muscoy. And as I sat in Mr. Tenley's office I thought of the Las Vegas section of the pipeline map: how, on the one hand, people in this country like to assume a level of trust; how, on the other, they will use only the simplest tools toward the building up of trust. Can one really have strange cities in the desert which desperately need a complex infrastructure to survive and, at the same time, have a simple belief that simple beliefs are sufficient to keep the human ecology healthy? For human beings to function in an atmosphere of trust, after all, a certain understanding of one's surroundings is necessary, I think.

And so I continued with this line of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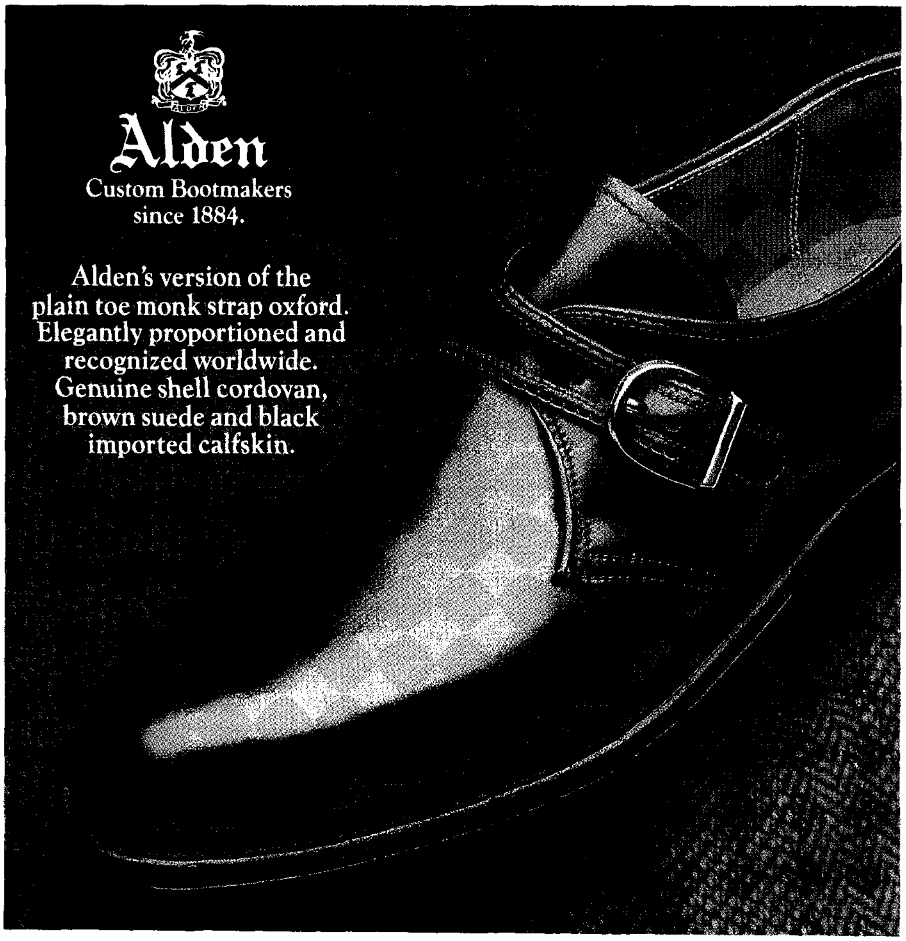
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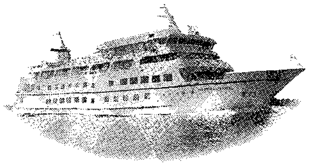

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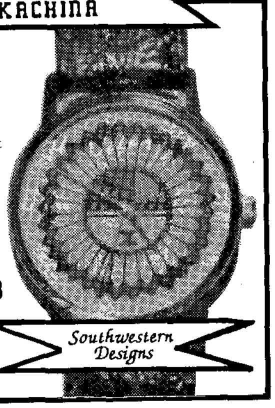

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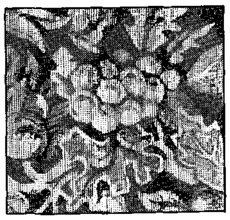

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argument. I said, "It's a fact of life in America that a lot of things built under certain social and economic conditions in Year A go on to live in social circumstances in Year M."

"In applying your thesis here, I would say that our safety record suggests that the thesis is not at work here," Mr. Tenley said.

It is the question of how things look that I keep coming back to: the small neighborhood of Muscoy; Las Vegas; Mr. Tenley, Mr. Gute, and myself in Mr. Tenley's office in Washington; a network of a million and a half miles of pipeline; neighborhoods thrown up against a railroad line. I can get a mental picture of the guys working to have a (partial) look at the pipe. The two men were Jim Still and Dan Biskeborn. They work for the Arizona Pipeline Company, and were working under contract to Calnev. What they did during the eighteen-hour period they had in which to look at the line was, first, to dig through the trona that lay everywhere in their path. Where they found debris—parts of the train and its locomotives—they investigated further. They also dug an eighty-foot trench under a spot where a locomotive had lain directly over the pipeline. Then they dug "potholes" every fifty feet down to the pipe to have a look—every fifty feet except for one or two places where it was more like sixty or seventy feet. And everything looked all right. They could not detect any damage to the pipeline. I try to see them, in my mind's eye. They are using a small Case backhoe. Their piece of equipment is dwarfed by some others on the job. There are the two cranes that have been used to lift the locomotive off the pipeline, for instance—giant cranes, capable of carrying a hundred tons each. The two men are digging through the trona that lies over the pipeline, usually to a depth of five or six feet. Occasionally, they run into a piece of a railroad car stuck in the trona, and then they dig down below the earth's surface to the pipeline to make sure it's O.K. Where there's smoke, there may be fire—that theory. One reason they have had to wait to make this inspection is that the railroad has built a huge "haul road" across the pipeline—more than a hundred feet wide. This haul road lies on top of the spilled trona, and across it have been carried the scattered (and now empty) railroad cars that fell onto houses and into the back yards of houses. The giant cranes have carried these cars across the pipeline on the haul road. Mr. Biskeborn and Mr. Still had to wait for this process to be completed, because in order to examine the pipeline they had to cut through the haul road, and they couldn't do that as long as the haul road was in use. Now, at the moment I am trying to visualize, the work of carrying the freight cars on the haul road has been completed, and Mr. Biskeborn and Mr. Still can begin. One point that investigators have looked into, by the way, is: Were any of these freight cars *dragged* along the haul road? Or not? That was forbidden. Everything was meant to be carried, not dragged, out of respect for the integrity of the pipeline. At least one observer has testified that some equipment was dragged.

TO understand landscape may be the highest calling. How would it work in this country's history? Well, in 1789 the landscape would be perceived, I think, as the work of God; the largest and most impressive buildings would be churches, plantation houses, the classically influenced brick town houses of certain rich men. For the future, there was projected, as a symbol of our reign over our land, the Capitol, which, at the time of its completion, in 1827, was the largest man-made structure in the country.

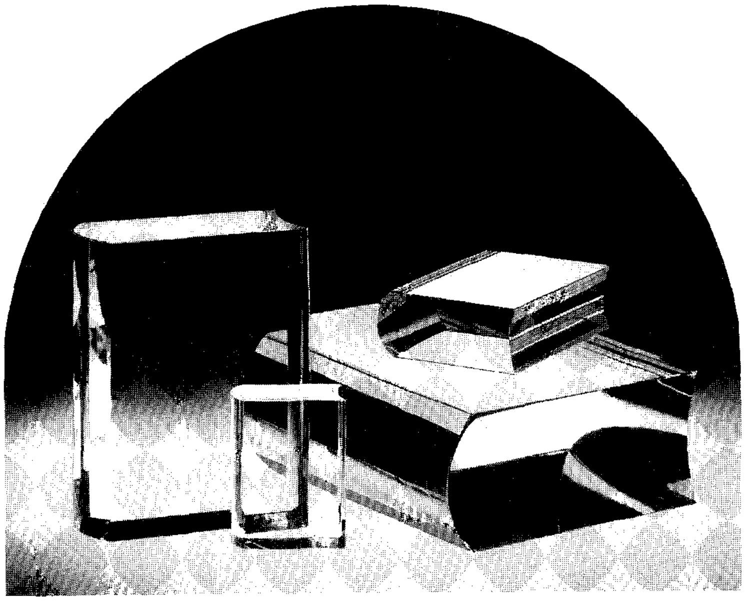
A hundred years later, railroads were the most important feature on the landscape. Were they more important in the minds of men than the Mississippi, for instance? Or the Rocky Mountains? If so, God was put in his place.

What of the landscape now? I went to San Bernardino in November and drove out Highland Avenue toward the community of Muscoy. I drove along Macy Street, the street that connects the community with Highland, which is a main thoroughfare. The weather was crystal clear. You could look up, and there were the mountains, almost directly above, rising above the little community of Muscoy. They were so majestic! It proved to be this way day after day. People said, "This is unusual. Some days, you can't see the mountains at all."

Once inside the Muscoy neighborhood, I stopped my car. I saw two men and asked them where Duffy Street was. They told me. And then they warned me about the people living in that neighborhood. These two men were white craftsmen. They were working on a house that had been damaged by the explosion, but not seriously, so it could be repaired. These men were working for a man who had bought the damaged house and was preparing to resell it. Oh, is it impossible, too commonplace, to say that buying-and-selling activities are so prevalent now that they are like the workings of *E. coli* in the human digestive system: just going on and on, whether one is in a train wreck or in a fire, so that, whatever activity one is in, however dramatic it is, one feels this other *eternal* activity going on—not God healing but the process of exchange?

In any case, these two men seemed like white blood cells to me—beneficial in action, perhaps, but if you had too many of them you were in trouble. They warned me that this was a neighborhood that had problems with drugs and crime, and was dangerous. It was midday, the mountains were out, and the process of refurbishing for resale was going on, and the community had undergone two traumas that had come into it from the outside, a train accident and a pipeline explosion—traumas that, I guessed, must have badly damaged its spirit and *had* physically shocked it with two kinds of dramatic destruction. And yet, I was told, it was the community itself that was dangerous; the fragile human beings living there were the scary thing.

I have a friend who is working on a book of fiction called "Negrophobia," and suddenly, when I was talking to those two white craftsmen in the middle of a clear California day, I thought, I get it. By which I meant that I could see how things must seem to a black person. Have I said that the small neighborhood of Muscoy had many black residents? That the neighborhood residents who died were black people? Well, it took this stark juxtaposition to make me see why my friend entitled his work "Negrophobia." First, the mountains. Who could be afraid of anything with those mountains there? Second, if one were to be afraid, is it not the unpredictable consequences of building an overelaborate network of dangerous or potentially dangerous tools to meet human needs that we should be afraid of? Well, if the mountain had been abstract, one might have said, "Mountains are all



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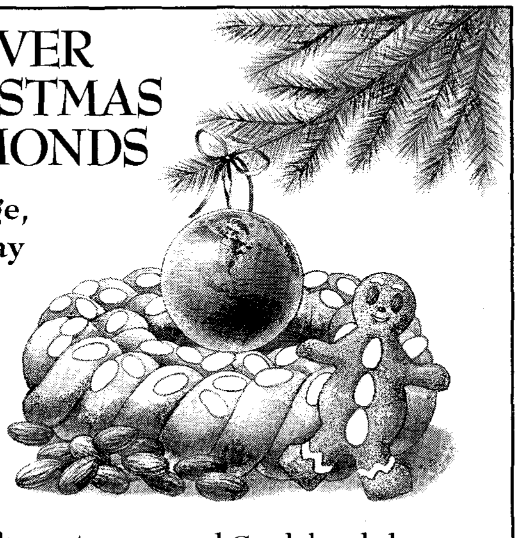

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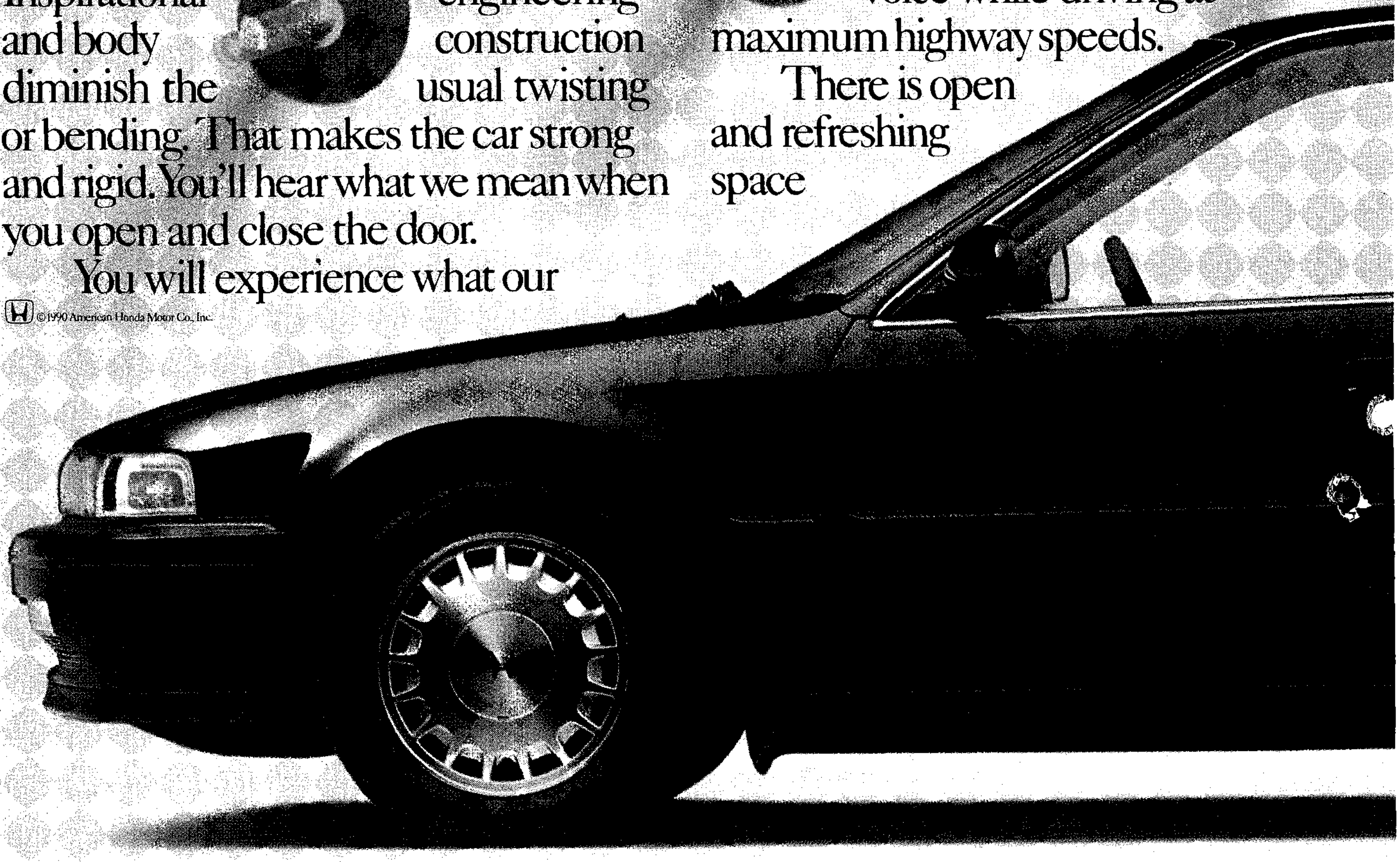

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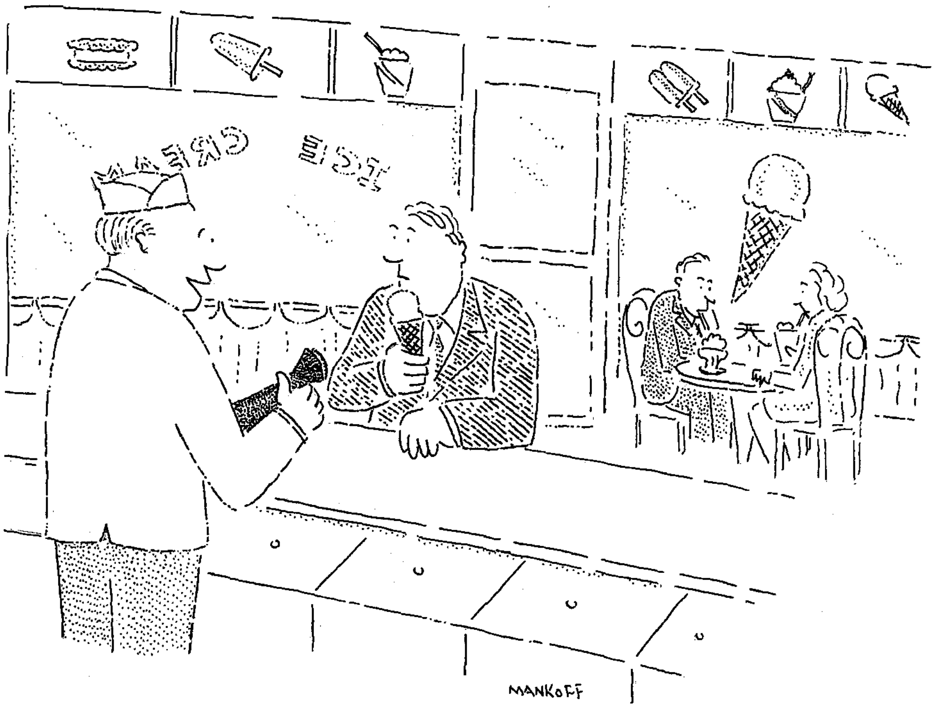


*"Freshly ground pepper, sir?"*

very well, but a black teen-ager may still kill you while you look up into the mountains"; the mountains, however, were *right there*, you know—so beautiful to look at that it was not possible to imagine any teen-ager of any kind going on the attack. And the derailment had not been abstract; it had happened. It was later that I learned from Mr. Pugh that computer simulations of a freight-train run (configured like the run of the freight train that derailed in Muscoy) had shown that a train *must* derail at the tightest arc of the curve of track when it hits any speed over fifty-five miles an hour. Perhaps, in the light of all this there should have been a brochure handed out to residents of Duffy Street saying, "A train going more than fifty-five miles an hour around the curve will derail into your back yards and on top of your houses." Or, if we were living in times when prophetic utterance was accepted as possible, a prophet might have said, "One day, a train will come along the curve; it will travel at fifty-six miles an hour, and this train will destroy a large part of you." In any case, the derailment happened. At the time I was talking to the craftsmen, I knew that it had destroyed two boys, seven and nine, and I knew that the pipeline explosion thirteen days later had incinerated two women, and I could not, just at that moment, focus on possible danger coming to me as a white person from members of the community.

So I went to Duffy Street. I knocked on the door of a small ranch house. The shades were drawn. There was a noise behind the door, and I spoke, saying what my business was, but no one answered the door. And, involuntarily, I thought about what the craftsmen had told me about drugs and crime *in this community*. Perhaps this was a drug house! Certainly it looked not open, not friendly. And then I remembered that I was visiting here. And then I remembered that a train had fallen off its tracks a hundred feet from where I stood, and that hundreds of people, most of them white, had been running around this neighborhood for months. I was feeling threatened because I was not getting a big New England welcome from traumatized people. And I began to get a *little* idea of what the abused but necessary word "racism" would mean to a black person. It might mean not only "laws and customs that exclude me" but also "You are interrupting me just when I was about to say something important," and "You are feeling threatened by me when I can barely face what has happened to me."

So I left that house, and then I allowed myself to have a commonsense idea. I walked by a house that was really well kept up. There were two cars in the driveway, good cars. And I allowed myself to think, These people are doing O.K., maybe I'll try to talk to them.

And so I met the Atkinses.

*I think (I almost want to say "I figure," like some cowboy philosopher) that people are formed by ritual and live in a landscape.*

*If the ritual you are being formed by does not account for what you see, then there are three possibilities:*

*1. You enter into the ritual without believing in it.*

*2. You enter into the ritual and exclude the world.*

*3. You submit to confusion, and hope for a new state—of faith.*

*The point of this story is:*

*1. The makers of the modern landscape, however impressive their achievements, however elaborate their tools, their precautions, and their self-adjustments, have failed to develop a ritual sufficient to account for what they have made.*

*2. No matter. The Atkins family will do well.*

The James Atkinses live at 2451 Duffy Street. Their house is intact. Not a leaf on a tree has been disturbed. No. 2451 is one house in from Mesa Street, which comes into Duffy Street at a right angle. Mesa Street ends at Duffy. Across Duffy at the end of Mesa is Lot 70—No. 2404 Duffy. In the picture I am looking at, the back yard of No. 2404 is littered with the giant freight cars God threw off the track at Muscoy, but they do not touch the house. In the picture I am looking at, the Atkins house is less than two hundred feet away from the scattered freight cars—safe.

When I first visited the Atkins home, I met Donna Atkins, who is thirty years old; her sister Robyn, who is nineteen; and Robyn's infant child, Linda. On a second visit, I met James Atkins, a postal worker in his fifties. To Donna Atkins, on my first visit, I said, "I'm doing a story about the derailment, and I've been walking around the neighborhood trying to imagine a little bit of what it was like to have that huge train come down that hill and off the embankment."

Donna Atkins told me she had been walking at the corner of Duffy and Mesa Streets with her daughter, Jasmine Hunter, who is seven, when the train derailed, less than a hundred feet away from them. "And we were counting the cars," Donna Atkins said. "And she was saying how fast it was going. She couldn't keep up, and it fell down." Donna Atkins' voice was very soft when she said, "and it fell down." She went on, "And she—we just looked at each other, and before we knew it the train was coming down."

"What did you do—did you look at it?" I asked.

"Jasmine was hysterical. We saw— There was a family that used to live there, in a house on the other side of Duffy Street. They started running. It started hitting the house, they started running out. . . . The father was in the back yard, and I saw him running from the back yard, because I guess he saw it coming, but at that exact moment I had no idea it was the train, you know—that the train was going to come off. Like I say, we were counting the cars. And it just— a big thing of smoke, and it came down. There was potash on it, and it just flew all across the street; it was in the air, and over us. Jasmine was hysterical. Everybody was, really."

"So you were thinking about her. But did any other thoughts flash through your mind?"

"It was just unbelievable, because we've lived here a long time. We were the first people who moved to this neighborhood, in these tract homes. We were the very first people here, so all these houses were empty when we moved here. And it was always a thing: 'I wonder— No, the train will never fall off.' We used to run across the street—there's a little tunnel, and we'd get under it as the train went by. We moved here in '70. My sister was born in '71. No one else lived here, we were just the only family here, all by ourselves."

"And obviously you didn't worry about the train."

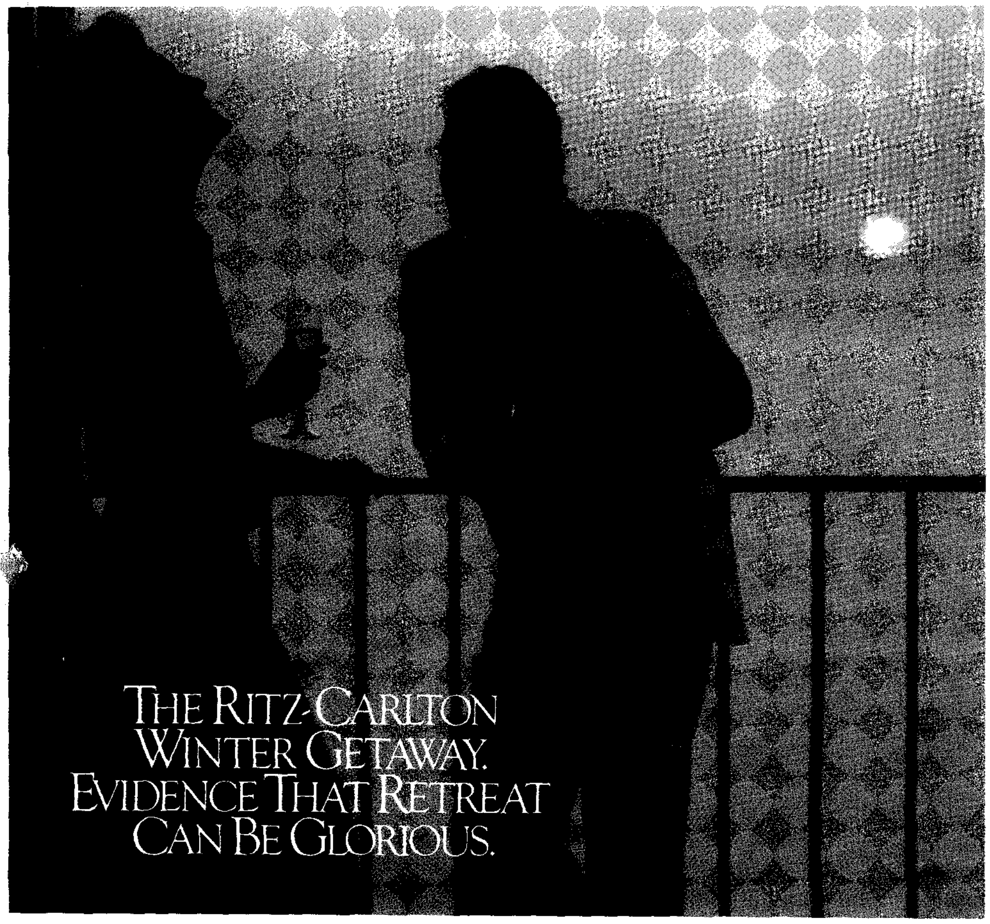
"No, no. We talked about it as we grew older. 'What if that train came off the track? Wouldn't that be something?' It *was* really something. And then the fire took place—almost the same time, I was doing the exact same thing. My daughter had just got on the bus. She missed the fire. The bus was at the corner when the fire took place. So I mean it was the exact same thing, almost the same time."

"You were at the corner of Duffy and . . ."

"Right there—Mesa. I saw the gas coming out. I just happened to look down, and there's the gas just shooting straight out, and I knew right away what it was."

I asked Donna to show me where the gasoline had come from, and we walked outside to the curb. Once again, I was struck by how clear the air was.

"See where that truck is in the yard?" Donna asked, "truck" meaning a pile of stuff. "It was shooting directly across the street." I looked where she was pointing—to a vacant lot. "See that black spot? It was shooting straight. I tell you, I woke up the whole neighborhood, screaming. You know, it was spilling out, and I was screaming—you know how you scream when you're all upset? So it took my breath away, and I ran to the door, to bang on the door, because my brother wasn't coming out. And I thought he'd be sleeping, and it exploded. And it knocked me all the way back to— And we have that iron gate and it's real hot, and I was screaming, but by that time he ran out, and we just all took off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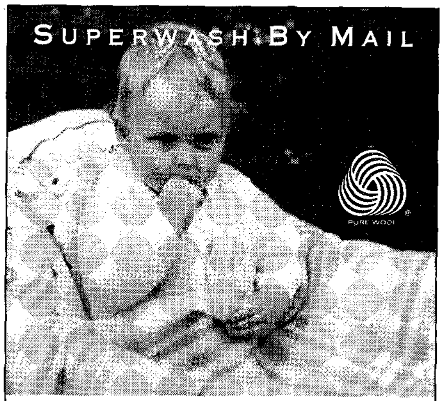

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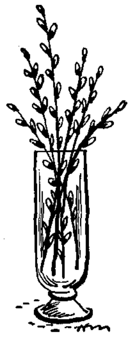
running. It was something. It was really something."

"And first you saw it . . ."

"Before it even exploded. It was just shooting out, like. You know, if you take the thing off the fire hydrant it shoots straight out? That's exactly how it was doing. Now my daughter Jasmine says, 'Why don't we pick the house up and take it somewhere else?' She also says, 'There's something in the *air*.' It's so strange, because the day that the fire took place—the night before, she kept saying, 'I just don't feel right. I don't think I should go to school.' I had to drag her to the bus stop. 'I don't want to go, Mom. I just feel like something's going to happen.' I'm thinking, Jasmine's just saying that because of the train—because of everything she's been through. She said, 'It just doesn't feel right, Mom.' And the minute she got on the bus . . . The next time I saw her, I was in the emergency room of Kaiser Permanente. She came in to see me and she said, 'Mommy, I told you something was going to happen.' She said, 'I knew something was going to happen, that's why I didn't want to leave you, you know?' So it's hard, because now she's like glue. Everywhere I go, everything I do, she's there. She doesn't want to do anything."

"She doesn't want anything to happen to you."

"Nothing. She won't stand on the corner anymore for the bus. She stays—The bus driver pulls to the door just about every day. She never does leave. She stands. She'll look out the door; she'll look out the door until she sees it."



The next day, I paid a visit to Mr. Atkins. James Atkins is an extremely energetic man. What is more, he looks happy. I asked him about events on the day of the derailment.

"Yes, I was here the morning of the derailment, when the train first derailed. I was in bed, and Robyn was up getting ready for school, and—well, we were used to the train coming through, because in our back bedroom we could hear the rumble, but this was a different kind of rumble. I mean it was excessive. And I knew it was the train. Me and my wife was laying in bed, but I just couldn't visualize it—I was in a *trance*. I was in bed, helpless, like I was in a dream, because of this tremendous noise, and it was unusual. Then Robyn came in and screams. She says, 'Come on and look.' Then that's— That immediately snapped me out of it, snapped me out of the dream.

"And those houses across the street were, like, devastated. I saw nothing but dust and just a pile of train, and so I ran out, and when my neighbor came out in his pajamas he said, 'My kids are trapped in there.' And his wife came out and we ran, and the house was— The houses were— The train was all in the back yard. The houses were pushed forward, you know, so they dug themselves through the dust, and he has bars on his windows; therefore we couldn't get the kids out the window. Up in the roof there was a skylight. She says, 'There's a light up on the roof,' so we went and got the ladder out of the garage and put it up there, and they came up through the roof, and we helped them down. Those two got out. The next two kids in a house farther down the street—younger kids—they didn't make it out. Both of them died right in there.

"I helped them, and I was going up and down the street, because there were other people helping each other. And, ah, everybody was sort of huddled together, huddled together out in my yard, like, because it was right here that everything was sort of clear on this side. So they came and huddled up. Police came.

"I had called. I called the mayor's office, and the mayor-to-be's office, and the Police Department. In the meantime, there were other people, going to and from work, and they saw it, too, and there were some detectives, I think, and they radioed in and said, 'Bring everything.' And finally they came, but nobody really knew the devastation. The train was just piled up on the houses—on top and in the back."

"On top of the houses and in the back yards?"

"That's right. And that house down there that Chris Shaw was trapped in?" Chris Shaw is a man who was rescued after being trapped for fifteen hours in the debris. "It was like two trains was lying on top of the house. The house was just flat. And you look and you say 'awhhhhh.' And everybody saying, 'Yeah, Chris is in there,' and his mother says, 'Yeah, Chris is in there, because I just talked to him this morning.' "

"What was it like, the dust? I mean, was it like being in a dust storm, with all the trona all over?"

"It was like a dust storm. You looked out and, wow, you couldn't see nothing. All this trona, you know—you couldn't see a thing."

I asked Mr. Atkins how he happened to move to the neighborhood of Muscoy.

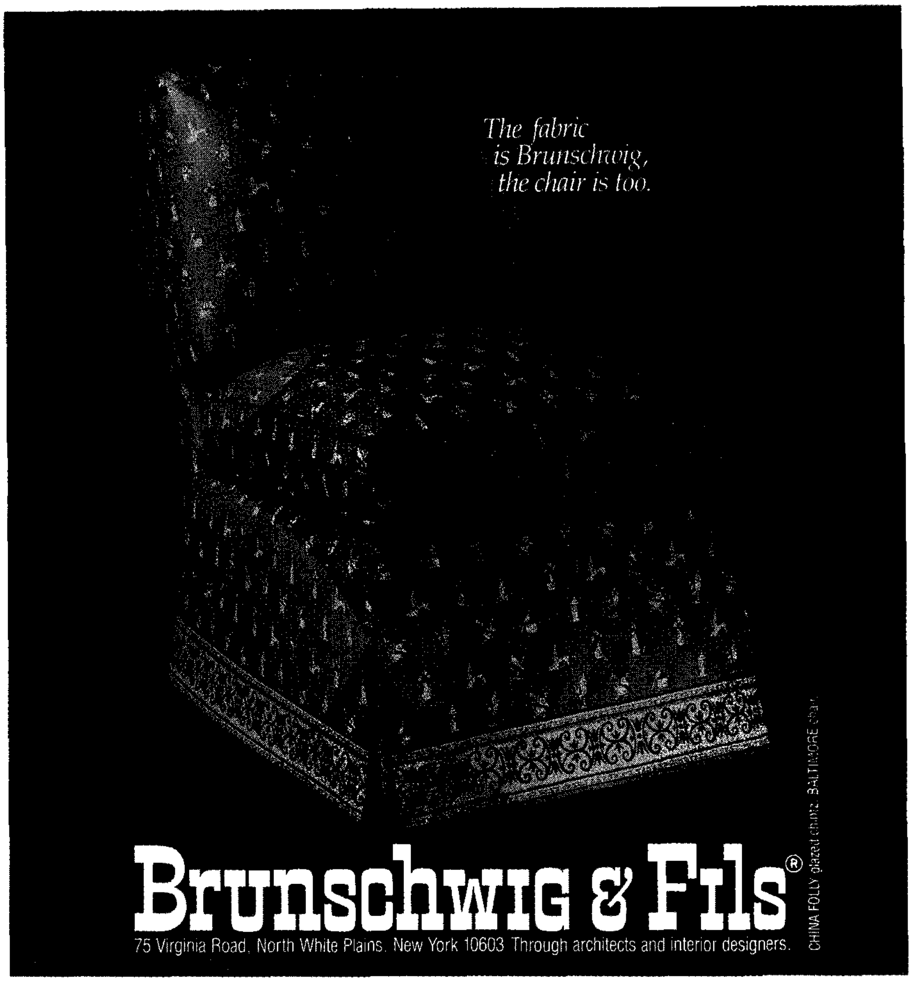
"Well, I came to San Bernardino in 1961. I was in the service at Norton Air Force Base. We came from Japan."

I asked Mr. Atkins where he was from originally.

"South Carolina. Beaufort. Right on the waterfront. That's right. I lived on the island—St. Helena Island. I imagine you've been over on the big island. Well, I lived over on the island."

"And you have family there still?"

"Oh, yeah, they're still there. I graduated from school in Beaufort. After high school, I went into the service. Air Force. My first enlistment was overseas. Then I came back to Oklahoma, stayed there a year, went to Japan, stayed about three years and nine months, and then we came to Norton—near San Bernardino—in 1961. We stayed here. I went to Okinawa, but my family stayed here. I was in Taiwan, Vietnam, then back in North California, but my family stayed here. One day, in 1970, my wife called me. 'They're building some new homes. I want you to come down.' So I flew down—put a down payment on a house in Redlands, near San Bernardino—a new tract. And I have a friend in real estate in San Bernardino, so I stopped by his place, and he said, 'Well, look, we're building some homes over here.' The house in Redlands was three-bedroom, and these here were five-bedroom. And I had eight kids then. I told my wife, 'You know what? A bedroom makes a difference.' I liked the other location better, because it was near two schools, but we had to more or less go for the space. We were the first ones to pay, and we were the first ones to move in. I got transferred back to Norton. My wife moved here about the first of November, and I got transferred here about the twentieth of November. I got transferred from Beale to Norton, and I came on here. And we stayed here, like I say, three weeks before any other family moved in. And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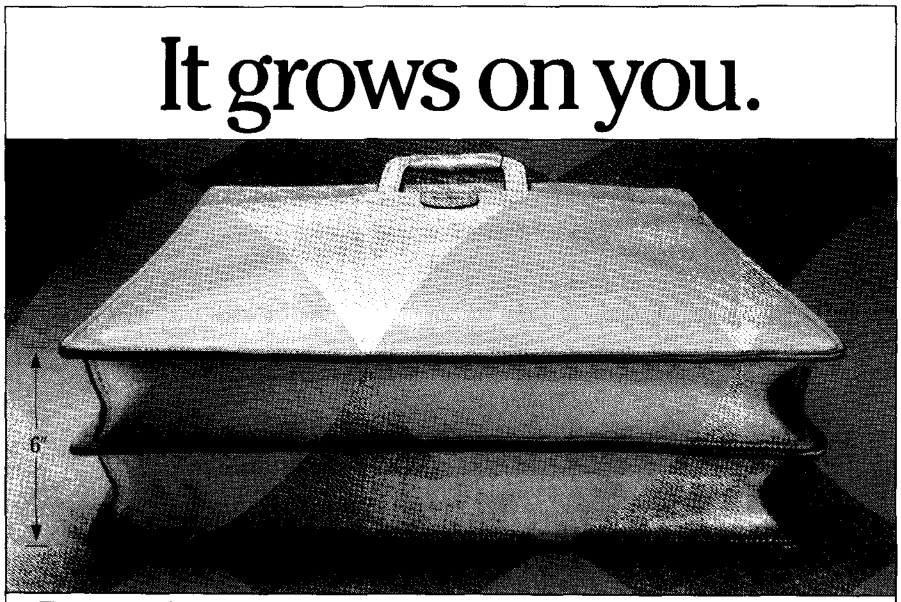
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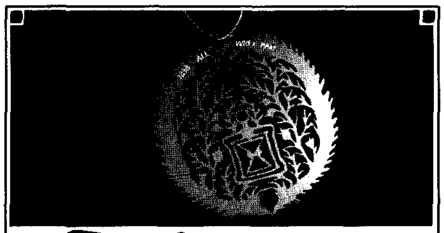

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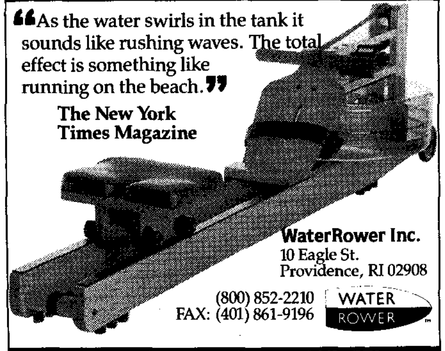

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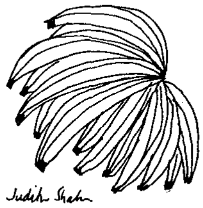
then, you know, people moved in. The gentleman across the street here, his father and I were in the service together, and I knew him from a teen-ager. And the gentleman over here, Greenwood, I knew his brothers and cousins."

Over the mantel in the Atkins living room there is a photograph of all the Atkins children. The photograph was given to Mr. and Mrs. Atkins on the occasion of their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary, in August of 1989. I asked Mr. Atkins to tell me the names of his children.



"O.K. I'll start from the oldest. This is the oldest, this is James—Jimmy. James. He's the next—Raymond, lives in Long Beach. This is a daughter here, the oldest daughter, Liz is in Los Angeles. That's Donna, who you met, but Lawrence is the next oldest. Lawrence, he lives in Upland. Donna is next. Then Carol. Carol is here with us. And Vincent. He's in there laying down. That's the youngest son. Then Robyn, the youngest daughter of all. We had eight, and then, after I came back from Vietnam, we had Robyn, in 1971. She just graduated from high school."

"Did you tell me the name of this daughter?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry, that's Karen. That's the one in Hawaii. Karen is after—after Donna. That's Karen, then Carol, then Robyn." Mr. Atkins counted up his children—1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

"In an age when people are having smaller families . . ." I said.

"We got married in 1954," Mr. Atkins said. "And, see, well, you don't find big families anymore. In other words, my wife is Catholic, from England, strong Catholic, and they don't believe in contraceptives, you know. Strong Catholic, and so—and we were young, and then we just had one after another, you know. I was in the service. It wasn't *hard*. Well, for her, because she had to devote all her time to the kids and never work. I mean, she couldn't go to work, so she devoted all her time to the kids. So now I tell my kids, I say, 'Hey, you guys never wanted for anything.' You know, they never wanted for nothing. They can't say—Nobody can come and say, 'We were devastated for this and that.' No, that wasn't true. I mean, they didn't get everything in the world they wanted, but they got all the necessities and extras. So now, like I said, they're having children, and it revolves. I said, 'We've got, we had, and whatever.' "

"And they're all good-looking people," I said. "That's nice."

I sat at the Atkinses' dining-room table and talked to Donna Atkins' daughter, Jasmine. I asked her to tell me about the derailment.

"We were waiting for the bus and we were counting the trains, and the trains just started falling down," she said.

"Do you remember how many cars you saw when you were counting?" I asked.

"Three."

"What was going on in your mind when it happened?"

"I was scared."

"And what did you do then?"

"Me and my mom went back to my grandma's house, and my little cousin was wrapped up in a blanket."

"I don't mean to upset you. You were worried about him—is that what you are saying? What did it look like outside?"

"Potash was over the houses. One of the houses over on the other side from us was damaged," she said.

"How did you spend the rest of that day?"

"They took the people all out of the neighborhood and took them to hotels."

I asked Jasmine to tell me about the pipeline explosion. She said, "When they cleaned the area, everybody came back to their houses. They knocked down all the houses over here. They said something was wrong with the pipe, so they did tests on it, and then, one day, my mom took me to school and I told her"—this was said with emotion—"this part of the accident was going to happen, and she didn't listen to me."

"Really?"

"Uh-huh." Jasmine was upset at telling me this. "I saw a big fire, and the bus driver said it was by our house," she said.

I changed the subject. "What are your favorite things?" I asked.

"I like riding bikes and skating," she said.

I asked her if she had any favorite books.

" 'Alice in Wonderland,' 'Sleeping Beauty,' " she said.

“Do you feel like Alice sometimes?” I asked.

“Yes,” she said.

“That’s good. This is like Wonderland sometimes,” I said.

“Yes!” she said.

Donna Atkins came over to the table. I had asked Mr. Atkins the name of the man whose children he had helped to rescue.

“Johnny Allen was the man whose children my father took out of the house,” Donna Atkins said. “His grandson is Jasmine’s cousin, and she was worried about him all day long.”

“Children get a maternal instinct very early sometimes,” I said.

“She really does—she’s just a little old woman,” Donna Atkins said. “She’s really been just like an old woman since then. But she’s doing O.K. She’s sleeping better now.”

I left the Atkins house at four-thirty in the afternoon. I looked at the sun shining on the mountains behind the house. It is extraordinary, I thought. I drove down Mesa Street, looking straight ahead at the mountains, the mountains curved into a semicircle, all of them beautiful, and behind (I was looking back in the mirror) at a Cadillac and, behind that, the railroad berm. I saw bright, golden light, and one power stanchion in the left of the mirror.

“This is far from home, this is far from home,” I said to myself. “This is far from home. This *is* home.”

I thought about Jasmine Hunter. She is such an intelligent child. She will spend the rest of her life trying to figure this out, one way or another, I thought. Then I remembered the end of my conversation with her grandfather James Atkins. We were standing outside his house—his house, which was left intact on the boundary of complete devastation. “One thing makes me angry, they described us as ‘*poor*,’ ” he said. “We’re not poor. I have my pension from the Air Force and my job at the post office.” His voice was definite and a bit fierce. “We’re the Atkins family. We’re building around that.” —GEORGE W. S. TROW

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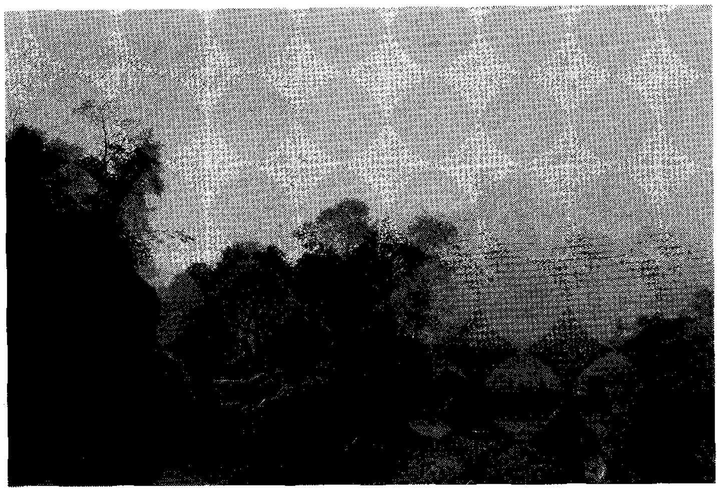

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# REPORT FROM CHINA

IN March of 1988, about six months after I took a job in China, my wife and I, along with a score of other "foreign experts" in Beijing, went to view a newly rebuilt section of the Great Wall, at Huangyaguan, a hundred miles east of the capital. Work on the project—the re-creation of a five-hundred-year-old stretch of the wall, which itself is over fourteen hundred years old—was begun in 1984. In a village at its base, we were shown inscriptions by both Mao Zedong ("If you have not been to the Great Wall, you are not a good Chinese") and China's current senior leader, Deng Xiaoping ("Let's love our China, rebuild our Great Wall"). On the whole, the new construction, consisting of an array of gray bricks piled about twenty-five feet high and scrupulously aligned for several hundred yards between the faces of vertical cliffs, struck me as a pointless prettification of a ruin already more than magnificent. One of my colleagues—Soo-Bin Park, a Korean-born economics professor from Carleton University, in Ottawa—disagreed. "The tradition isn't the wall itself," Dr. Park pointed out. "It's the rebuilding of the wall. Every Chinese dynasty has rebuilt it, and now this one has, too."

However, a different Chinese purpose lies behind the most recent reconstruction, going on not only at Huangyaguan but also along several other sections of the wall, which runs for some fifteen hundred miles across northern China: it now functions to attract foreigners, not to exclude them. Over the years, China has had a shifting perspective—an alternate tolerance and intolerance of foreigners. A primary thrust of the Boxer Rebellion, beginning in 1898, and the Cultural Revolution, beginning in 1966, was to rid the country of foreign influences—and foreigners as well. Since the late seventies, when Opening to the Outside World became official policy, China has actively sought both foreign technical expertise and tourist dollars—but it still vigilantly maintains walls of unofficial custom and official segregation to limit what it fears as "cultural pollution" from outside China. The government has now made it feasible for tourists to spend as long as a month in the country, live in Westernized hotels restricted to foreigners, and sightsee through the windows of comfortable buses and trains but never meet, or exchange even phrasebook pleasantries with, any Chinese other than guides, waiters, and salespeople in the state-run Friendship Stores, all of whom receive continual indoctrination on dealing with—and keeping aloof from—foreigners. So far, over six hundred and twenty cities and counties have been opened for such sanitized tourism, but there are a thousand-odd subdivisions of the mainland's twenty-two provinces and five autonomous regions, and the open ones probably represent less than half the nation's area. To reach the rebuilt wall at Huangyaguan, our guides had to drive us over a road where a sign saying "No Foreigners," in English and Chinese, was conspicuously posted.

Western gunboats established the first foreign-ruled concessions on Chinese soil a hundred and fifty years ago, in the Opium War, and the only Chinese admitted into their precincts were laborers, clerks, and servants. The present-day People's Republic encourages a renewal of the same segregation against its own people in government-owned stores and hotels and foreign-capitalized joint ventures, apparently in the belief that Westerners, and particularly Western tourists, demand it. Actually, what my wife and I found most difficult to accept during two years of working in China was having Chinese guests ask us to meet them outside one or another of the segregated hotels so we could escort them in. Once, I inquired of one guest, a Beijing physician, whose husband is an official of a government ministry, which of the city's hotels she preferred. "I really wouldn't know," she said. "This is the first one I've ever been in."

My wife left China last year with the evacuation of Americans after the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 4th; I remained on through the expiration of my contract with Xinhua—the New China News Agency—in September. We scheduled our return, on tourist visas, to coincide with the massacre's anniversary, and as soon as we landed at Beijing International Airport we encountered a more recent expression of China's outlook on foreigners. Although it was after midnight, we found an official dispatcher, a young woman wearing a cadre armband, keeping order in the normally chaotic taxi line outside the terminal. That was a

AND IN A FIVE-TO-FOUR DECISION TODAY THE UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT RULED THAT ATHEISTS MAY NOT BE BARRED FROM FOXHOLES.
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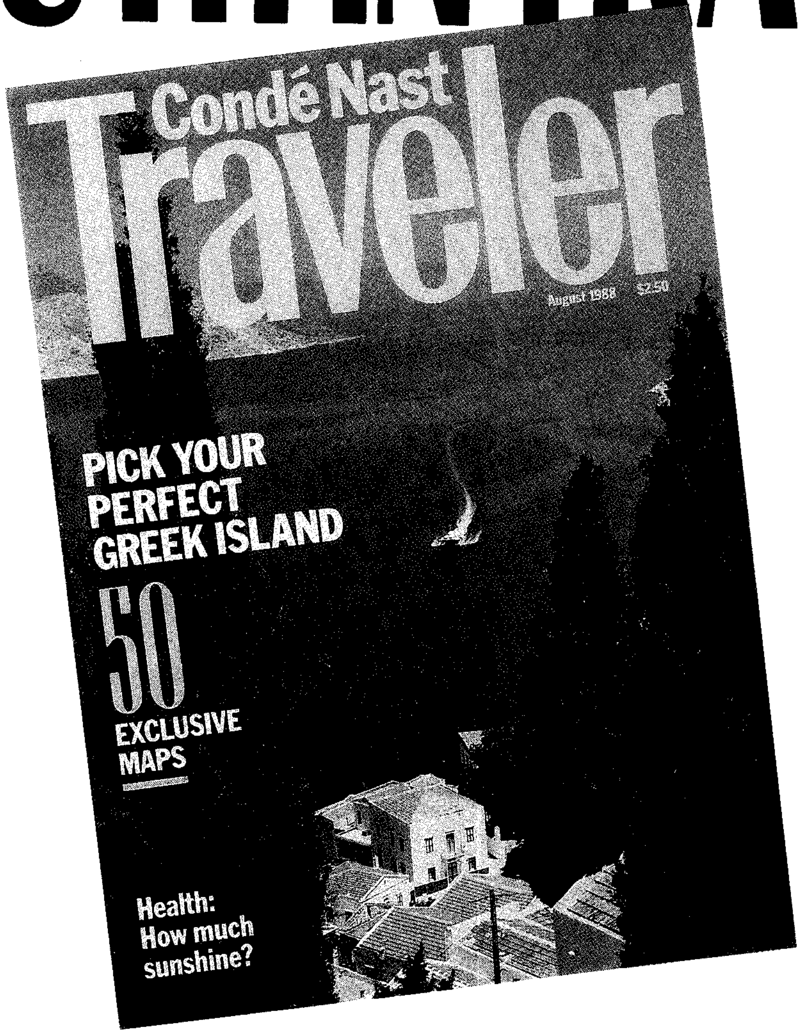
NEWS 10
John O'Brien

TRUTH IN TRAVEL



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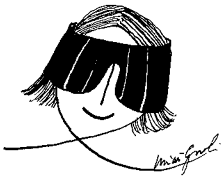
welcome innovation on behalf of foreign visitors, who are the predominant users of taxis in Beijing; on the other hand, there were no taxis available. Their drivers, we learned later, had been kept from reaching the airport by late-night roadblocks that soldiers and members of the People's Armed Police had established to counter "attempts at infiltration and subversion by foreign hostile forces"—specifically, to forestall any demonstrations to mark the Tiananmen anniversary. We waited nearly two hours in the company of the apologetic dispatcher before finally getting a cab, and then were stopped twice at roadblocks on our way into the center of the city.



Martial law was imposed in Beijing on May 20th last year, after more than a month of student demonstrations—it was this decree that People's Liberation Army soldiers were attempting to enforce when they shot their way to Tiananmen Square on June 4th—but this intimidation occurred five months after martial law had supposedly been lifted. Although thousands of soldiers had indeed been withdrawn from the city's principal intersections, at least during daylight and the early-evening hours, Beijing still seemed to me to be what it had been when I left it—a city under military occupation. The stated intent of the current occupation was to advertise the city as a safe environment for tourism, and specifically for the Asian Games, which began September 22nd and concluded October 7th. "MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO PROMOTE THE ASIAN GAMES," the public was exhorted on billboards and banners, in English and Chinese, displayed at many intersections. Demonstrations of the efforts that the government itself was making included nighttime police raids on the city's residential *hutongs*, or alleys, in order to round up and deport "illegal migrants," and, according to reports in the Western press, the execution of more than a thousand people said to be criminals, who might, in the words of a judge who sentenced eleven of them in late May, "perturb social order and public security in the capital and disturb the smooth functioning of the Asian Games."

Even while China was seeking to attract foreigners to come to the Asian Games (and increasing its efforts to bring the Olympic Games to Beijing in the year 2000), it was reinforcing the walls intended to keep its people from actually mingling with foreigners. History affords the Chinese plenty of reason for xenophobia, of course, and during the two years I worked in Beijing I had become accustomed to stories in the official media blaming foreign "infections" for everything from athlete's foot to AIDS, but it seemed to me that Premier Li Peng's speech last March to the annual session of the People's Congress, saying that the demonstrations of the previous summer were the result of "infiltration and subversion by foreign hostile forces," was intended to signal an official return to the attitude of the Cultural Revolution, and to earlier eras when those Chinese who associated with foreigners except in the line of duty or for business reasons were regarded as unpatriotic, and possibly as traitors. Some of this attitude persists on the streets, and Chinese women who have dated American or European friends of mine have been spat upon. The prejudice doesn't seem to apply in reverse, though—against Chinese men who date Caucasian women.

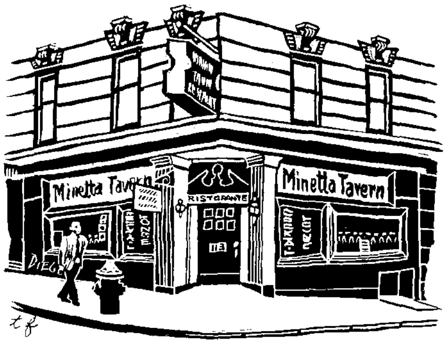
Happily, I found no signs of renewed bias among my Chinese friends in Beijing or among my former colleagues at Xinhua—they greeted me warmly—but during my visit this year I missed the contacts I had come to enjoy with strangers on the streets of Beijing and at the semi-official English Corner that the Beijing Municipal Authority established several years ago in northwestern Beijing's Purple Bamboo Park. English Corners had become features of many Chinese cities, and although it was generally believed that conversations held at them were often monitored by police agents, they did serve the purpose of putting Chinese who wished to practice their English in touch with Westerners, who were encouraged to go there on Sunday mornings and speak with them. Notices warning that the English Corner in Purple Bamboo Park was officially closed had been posted several months after Tiananmen, but I occasionally stopped by there anyway, as did other Westerners—until plainclothes Chinese policemen began arresting those who attempted to speak with us.

In such an atmosphere, the anniversary date that the government massed its police for passed more or less without incident. Beijing residents had been warned that anyone who wore all white or all black, the colors for mourning, faced arrest. There were several late-night demonstrations, but they occurred behind the walls of three Beijing campuses. Several Western journalists who had staked out vantage points outside the gate of Beijing University were roughed up, apparently by police officers, and a few Chinese were arrested after attempting to approach some journalists at Tiananmen, which police cordoned off on the days before the anniversary and on the day itself. Despite the relative calm, the official English-language *China Daily's* headline "BEIJING LIFE IS NORMAL ON JUNE 4" was correct only if "normal" applies to a city of people who are mostly intimidated into not speaking to foreigners and are living under the equivalent of military occupation.

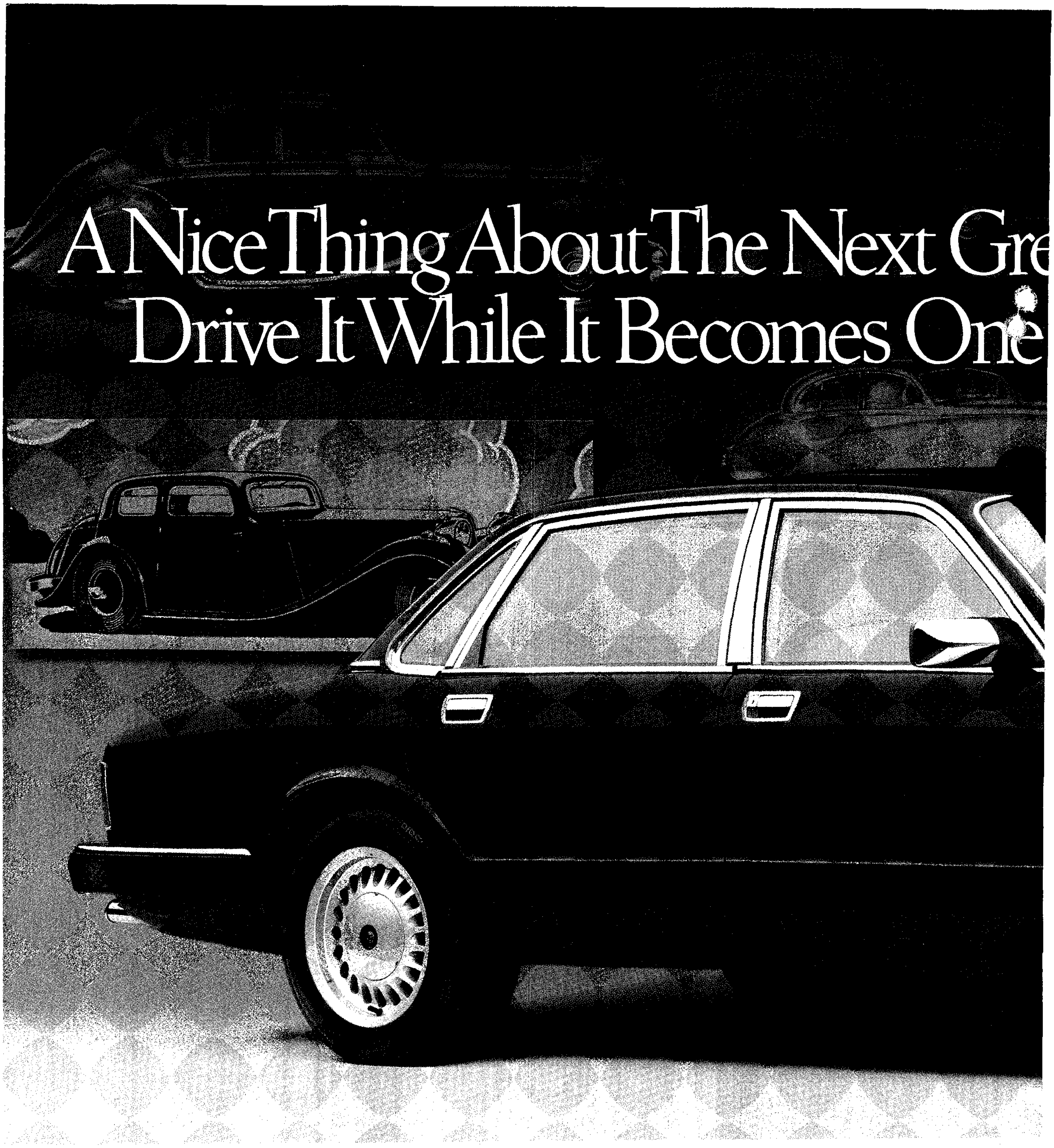
ON June 7th, I flew to Chengdu, in the southwestern province of Sichuan, to join the Lhasa portion of a tour previously arranged for three Swiss working in Beijing. People's Liberation Army troops had been occupying Lhasa since March 8, 1989, but in May they had withdrawn to their bases (one of which is in Lhasa itself). The People's Republic still makes it difficult for individual tourists, and for foreign reporters in particular, to travel there, however. Accordingly, when I applied for permission to travel to Tibet I listed my occupation as a retired English-language "polisher," or editor—my position at Xinhua—but I find it hard to believe that this subterfuge fooled anyone.

Therefore, I was not surprised to find awaiting me at the airport in Lhasa a first lieutenant in China's People's Armed Police. Chinese travellers and the sole passenger I could identify as a Tibetan passed without challenge, but the lieutenant stopped me, and addressed me, softly and courteously, in the best English I have heard from any member of China's security forces: "Pardon me, I am a police officer of my country, and I would ask if you have the documents required to visit this region of China." Neither then nor later did the lieutenant refer to Tibet by name—it was always "this region of China." I showed him my passport and pointed out a woman emerging from the plane behind me who was carrying the collective visa for our tour. "Let's just wait here for her then, shall we?" the lieutenant said. I stood on the tarmac until the three other members of our group were rounded up, and then we were led to a police barracks adjoining the airport terminal. We were detained there for thirty minutes, and were required to pay five yuan (a dollar and five cents) each, which our Chinese guide explained, with some embarrassment, was a visa fee to go to the city of Shigatse—a fee levied in addition to visa fees we had paid in Beijing. In my case, the visa fee was particularly unwarranted, because the tourist agency subsequently denied my request to continue to Shigatse, which is about a hundred and fifty miles to the west, with the other members of the tour. I mention the encounter only because China is a land of carefully applied symbols, and the lieutenant, with his command of English and his smooth representation of Chinese authority, symbolized a marked increase in both urbanity and intimidation in China: when friends of mine travelled to Lhasa two years ago, Chinese police who spoke no English merely handed them printed cards. These warned my friends that visitors "shall not spread the words which is harmful to our national dignity, sovereignty, territorial integrity or interference in our internal affairs, shall not distribute the books, periodicals, pictures, audio and video products and other propaganda articles which is harmful to politics, economy and culture of our country, shall not take drugs or go whoring, shall not illegally buy up cultural relics."

The unrest that the Chinese authorities had obviously feared in Tibet when these cards were distributed in July of 1988 broke out into rioting the following March, when Chinese police fired on an independence demonstration by about forty monks at Lhasa's central temple, the Jokhang. Blocks of Chinese-owned stores were burned in reprisal, and before and after the declaration of martial law—according to what was said to be a Public Security Bureau and Tibet Military District Command report subsequently leaked to the London *Observer*—more than four hundred and fifty Tibetans were killed, more than seven hundred were injured, and twenty-one hundred were arrested. One demonstrator was sentenced to life in prison, and other "troublemakers" have received up to seventeen years. Although no executions have been confirmed, the authoritative human-rights organization Asia Watch credits reports that many inmates of prisons and work camps have been beaten and tortured.



Martial-law restrictions were lifted in Lhasa on May 1st, and the reason I was allowed to go there little more than a month later, I think, was to witness the beginning of a renewed Chinese effort to establish the city as a sort of Tibetland—a sanitized attraction for tour groups but not for individual tourists, who might seek contact with the Tibetans themselves. An officially sanctioned tour of Lhasa with a Chinese guide is an experience comparable, perhaps, to what it might be like to take a luxury tour of Disneyland with a guide who is extremely knowledgeable about the Disney corporate assets but is candidly contemptuous of cartoon characters and patronizes those who come to see them. The woman assigned to take us through the sights gave her name as Liu Xi ("Call me Lucy"). She knew Tibetan history—from the Chinese point of view—and was able to distinguish among the various sects of the temples, and among their different religious statues. After more than three years in Tibet, she had mastered enough of the language to relay our questions to the monks who tended these shrines and to translate their answers for us. These exchanges, however, were interspersed with observations that in America would be thought bigoted; for example, "stupid" Tibetans come down to Lhasa in the winter, give too much of their limited sustenance to the monks, "and then go back in the mountains and starve." She took particular exception to the very un-Chinese custom in Tibet of allowing dogs to roam unmolested; the official estimate for Lhasa alone is fifty thousand dogs, or about one for every two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residents. “A lot of the food these people should keep for themselves goes to these dogs,” Lucy told us. She delivered these gratuitous official Chinese pronouncements on Tibetans while she was conducting us through the Potala Palace, a nine-story edifice dating from the seventh century, which is the former residence and government seat of the Dalai Lama. China recently began a thirty-five-million-yuan (or seven-million-dollar) rehabilitation of the Potala, but except for a few caretaker monks and some laborers carrying construction materials on their backs hundreds of feet up difficult stone staircases I saw no Tibetans there, and I asked Lucy if they were barred from their own shrines. “If we let them in, there would be so many that tourists wouldn't be able to get through,” she said, without embarrassment.

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China now claims that its suzerainty over Tibet dates back to the year 1247, when the grandson of Genghis Khan, the Mongol emperor of China, persuaded a Tibetan lama to act as his religious tutor in exchange for leaving Tibet alone. The four-hundred-and-seventy-thousand-square-mile plateau between the Kunlun and Himalayan ranges which the People's Republic now claims as the Tibet Autonomous Region, akin to a province, was not formally annexed by China until after the Chinese invasion, in 1950. This annexation has never been seriously challenged in the Western world, or in India, which shares part of Tibet's border and many of its traditions and sporadically clashes with China about that border. “I am not aware that at any time during the last few hundred years, Chinese sovereignty, or, if you like, suzerainty, was challenged by any outside country,” Jawaharlal Nehru said in 1954, speaking as India's Prime Minister. And as recently as October of 1987 Stapleton Roy, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, testifying before two House Foreign Affairs subcommittees, pointed out that “neither the United States nor any other member of the United Nations recognizes or has ever recognized Tibet as a sovereign state independent of China.”

The People's Republic sends to Tibet three hundred and thirty million pounds of grain annually—more than half the amount consumed—and China claims that it has freed five-sixths of Tibet's population, which it now estimates at slightly more than two million, from serfdom and has ameliorated some of the awful poverty that followed its occupation, in 1951. More than thirteen thousand miles of roads have been built, and annual per-capita income in Lhasa is officially calculated at three hundred and seventy-nine yuan; this amounts to only eighty American dollars, but it is an increase of a hundred and fifty-four per cent over the previous decade. Tibetans are also living much longer—the average life span has been extended, China says, from thirty-five years “before liberation” to sixty-three years today—and a recent government medical survey made the claim that Tibetan children from ages seven to seventeen are now almost two inches taller and four and a half pounds heavier than they were ten years ago.

Despite Chinese claims that conditions in Tibet have improved since 1951, resistance to Chinese rule continues to manifest itself, in forms ranging from very visible demonstrations to English-language notes saying “Help us to free Tibet” which are slipped into the hands of tourists. China is believed to keep some three hundred thousand People's Liberation Army soldiers in Tibet, which its maps formally designate as the Xizang Zizhiqu, or the Tibet Autonomous Region, but, perhaps because many are stationed in remote areas near China's occasionally disputed borders with India and Nepal, their presence is apparently less objectionable to Tibetans than the steady migration into the region of administrators, businessmen, and shopkeepers who are of Han descent—a people who make up ninety-three per cent of the population of China. According to official government statistics, which are bitterly disputed by Tibetans, the one hundred thousand civilian Chinese in the Tibet Autonomous Region account for only five per cent of the Tibetan population. There are perhaps two million more Tibetans living in areas that once belonged to Tibet historically and ethnically: parts of the neighboring Chinese provinces of Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan, and of Gansu, north of Qinghai.

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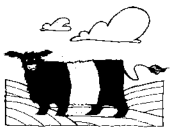

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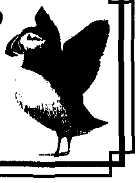

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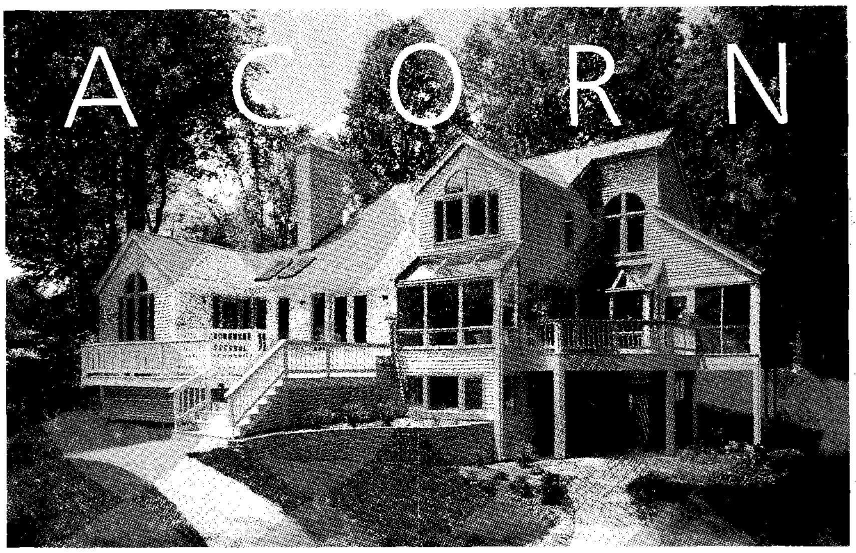

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live outside the Tibet Autonomous Region than in it has not gone unnoticed either in Beijing or in Dharmsala, India, the exile residence of the fourteenth Dalai Lama, who continues to claim these neighboring areas for "a zone of peace" that would comprise about one-third the area of China. The Dalai Lama left Lhasa in 1959, during an uprising by Tibetans who had become convinced that he was about to be arrested, and he has repeatedly spurned Chinese invitations to return to the Potala Palace and exercise limited authority over the Tibet Autonomous Region. The question is how limited his authority would be. The Dalai Lama himself has proposed that defense and foreign relations be left in Chinese hands, provided that Tibet becomes "a self-governing, democratic political entity," but his proposal has been firmly rejected in Beijing, which until last year counterbalanced the Dalai Lama with its own lama—the tenth Panchen Lama, whose monastery was at Shigatse. The Dalai Lama's world renown was reaffirmed when he received the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, but in Tibetan Buddhism his spiritual authority was historically rivalled by that of the Panchen Lama. Originally installed by the Nationalists, the tenth Panchen Lama was imprisoned for a number of years by the Communists for refusing to denounce the Dalai Lama. After his release, he preached loyalty to the "motherland" of China, was made a member of the governing standing committee of the National People's Congress, and spent much of his time in Beijing. The Panchen Lama suffered a fatal heart attack at his temple in Shigatse in January of 1989, however, and two months later, whether there was a connection or not, rioting began in Lhasa. Since then, not even the presence of armed patrols around Lhasa's temples and monasteries has suppressed what the Chinese call the "splittist" movement for Tibetan independence. When I arrived in Lhasa, the manager of the only tourist hotel then operating—a Holiday Inn—told me that a municipal regulation prohibited tourists from travelling about town unless they were escorted by an official guide. Nevertheless, I was not stopped when, a few hours after my encounter with the police lieutenant, I slipped away from Lucy, walked out of the hotel, and caught a pedicab to the Barkhor, the market around the Jokhang Temple, which has been the focal point of independence demonstrations. As it happened, that day, June 8th, was a religious festival marking the birth, death, and enlightenment of the Buddha, and Lucy had said that foreigners would not be safe near the temple. Yet I was made to feel not only safe but welcome in the crowd of thousands of Tibetans, many of whom had come in from the countryside to donate either currency or pictures of the Dalai Lama, which are highly valued, to monks and beggars encircling the Jokhang. A few of those I encountered saluted me by saying "Dalai" and giving a thumbs-up salute, and two men surreptitiously flashed at me from under their shirts medallions displaying symbols configured in the shape of an eagle-like bird, but most of the Tibetans I saw at the Jokhang greeted me apolitically (some by showing me their tongues, a traditional form of welcome), possibly because I was seen as a harbinger of a return of tourists after the lifting of martial law. I also noted Han Chinese, both in police uniforms and in civilian clothes, moving about the Tibetan market freely and apparently without apprehension.

## HANDS

Unadorned, they sat in our kitchen,
limp from the press of my mother's fingers.
All day she stood behind pedestals
of shoulders. I'd watch her
stand over them—elbows bent, arms
pumping lather. Eyes closed,
they willingly handed over their heads.
Hair was the one thing they could change.
In curlers they looked electric, pink.

Sometimes my mother was my customer.
The brush I held plowed its teeth
through her hair, turning the dark roots,
the magic oils that made it grow.
Silently I counted the strokes, waiting
for her to give up, lean
her head back into my expert hands.

A helpless customer, I pay strangers
to turn my hair light, lighter.
Soon I won't remember its original color.
If I could I'd go on counting the strokes,
backward this time.
In the middle of our kitchen I'd tell you
it's no use
orphaned from your powerful, mothering hands.

—Marianne Burke

• •

For the most part, my impression of Lhasa was of two communities, roughly divided by Hongshan, the hill on which the Potala Palace stands. What both Chinese and Tibetans call the "red city" is in the west, and it includes factories, government offices, the Army base, a medical school, a television transmitter, compounds for Chinese cadres, and the Holiday Inn. Most Lhasans live in the "white city," to the east, many of them in alleys around the Jokhang. In addition to the geographical separation, Lhasa's Tibetan and Han communities coexist in what are, in effect, separate time zones: The Chinese live by Beijing time, and feel that the Tibetans are lazy, because they rise at least two hours later, according to their own sun time. The Lhasans' sun time, however, gives them evening hours relatively free of the Chinese presence, and the city now boasts such attractions as video parlors, a dance hall, a cinema, cafés, and several pool halls.

Another facet of Tibetan life—one that is noticeable even during a brief tour—is a hunger for education. It was not money that small children begged from me but my pen. In their publications the Chinese frequently claim that before 1951 the only Tibetans to receive schooling were boys who left their families (not always voluntarily) to become monks. Now the region is said to support sixty-seven secondary schools and twenty-four hundred and fifty-three primary schools, where classes of both boys and girls are taught in both Tibetan and Mandarin, but, even by China's count, more than half of Tibet's children still do not attend school, and the most promising of those who do are sent far from their families to continue their education in eighteen schools that have been established in Chinese cities. Four hundred Tibetans are now studying at a middle school in Beijing. There is, however, a small university in Lhasa, and at Drepung Monastery, about four miles west of the city, I encountered a group of five of its students, who spoke to me in English and to Lucy in Mandarin. Later, I asked her how proficient they were in Chinese. "Not as good as their English," she said. Drepung is one of the few sites on the Lhasa tourist itinerary where, even under the eye of a Han guide, it is possible to mingle with Tibetans. Formally, as at the Potala Palace and the Jokhang Temple, passes carried by authorized tour guides are required for admission, but the checkpoint is more than a mile away, at a highway turnoff, and is easily bypassed by Tibetan pilgrims on muleback or on foot. The People's Armed Policemen see them coming and going through the hills, but take no action. "In Tibet," the Chinese say, "the sky is high and the emperor is far away."

The emperor is approaching, however. Last May, the People's Republic announced that Tibetan families, previously exempt from China's more stringent birth-control policies but already restricted to two children in the cities of Lhasa and Shigatse, would now be limited to three or four children in rural areas. While this is less restrictive than the policy the Chinese impose on themselves—only one child per couple—it will probably be no more popular than a similar measure, announced a year ago, has been in Xinjiang, the autonomous region to the north, whose residents also ignore Beijing time whenever they can. Unlike Tibet, Xinjiang is multiracial: it has thirteen recognized minorities, the largest, and most nomadic, being six million Uighurs, Muslim descendants of Turks, who live along China's border with the Soviet Union. Many of the

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peddlers, food-stand operators, and money changers in Beijing, Shanghai, and other large cities are Uighurs.

Friends of mine who have visited both autonomous regions tell me that the emperor is kept even farther away from Xinjiang than from Tibet—that fewer Hans appear to have migrated into cities predominantly occupied by Uighurs and by Kazaks, who are descendants of migrants from what is now part of the Soviet Union. While bands of Red Guards were encouraged to wipe out "foreign" influences in China during the Cultural Revolution—Lucy made a point of showing us where Buddhist murals had been obliterated from Drepung Monastery—official Chinese policy since the late seventies has been to respect the singularity of these ethnic and religious minorities. Television in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, now broadcasts seven hours a day in minority dialects, and over the past six years ten thousand Muslims, from Xinjiang and other regions, have been permitted to make the pilgrimage to Mecca; for some, its costs were partially subsidized. Also important to the minority races—they comprise almost seventy-eight million people, or seven per cent of China's population—has been an exemption until recently from the one-child policy, and last April, after the exemption was revoked in Xinjiang, rioting caused at least twenty-two deaths, and the region was closed to correspondents and tourists. The closing was not a step that China took lightly; Urumqi and Kashgar, which is China's westernmost city, were principal stations on the historic Silk Road across Asia, which had been profitably revived for tourism.

The difficulties faced by Tibetans, Uighurs, and other Chinese minorities include a scarcity of arable land in their areas and the results of development policies that favor the fertile areas along China's east coast, where the Han are concentrated, and where more than half the nation's industry and agriculture are centered. The government concedes that most members of minority races earn well under eighty-five dollars a year—China's national average is three hundred and thirty dollars—and that at least ten million are classified as living in poverty.

IN Beijing, to which I returned after my brief trip to Tibet, I noted that discrimination against China's national minorities seems far more subtle than it does in outlying areas. I recall speaking to a Mongolian university student two years ago; he told me, in quite understandable English, that he had been demoted to an inferior English class, because, according to an administrator, "all those people out in the grasslands have terrible accents." His teacher, a Canadian (who confirmed his account), protested that the Mongolian had the best English accent in the class, and the administrator replied, "Yes, but I have to protect our other students from his accent in Chinese."

Even more virulent than the prejudice that China's own minorities face in Beijing is the prejudice there against blacks. (The prefix "black" in Chinese can have the same negative connotation as it does in English, and in their social relationships the Hans historically have favored those with lighter skins. Perhaps this is one infection that China can fairly blame on the West; otherwise, I can't explain it, and neither can Han friends I've talked to about it.) Only a handful of Africans other than diplomats live in Beijing, and they were invited there over the past thirteen years by the government to teach or to study. Three years ago, the first English-speaking Chinese I encountered spotted a passing black and launched unprovoked into a stereotypical racial diatribe. Later, I heard some of this same prejudice freely aired at the English Corner.

Internationally, expressions of anti-black prejudice within China have become an embarrassment to the People's Republic, which has aspirations to leadership in the Third World; China is, in fact, contributing material foreign aid to many African nations, and supports fifteen hundred annual scholarships for Africans studying at Chinese universities. A hundred and fifty Africans were enrolled at Hehai University, in Nanjing, in 1988, and in December of that year Chinese students surrounded their dormitory and demonstrated for three nights; the proclaimed cause of their protest was an attempt by several African men to take Chinese women to a school dance. Three of the black students were detained by police, who accused them of assaulting an elderly Chinese guard, but the crowds around the dormitory and in the streets of Nanjing swelled until the other Africans had to be removed from the campus and seques-

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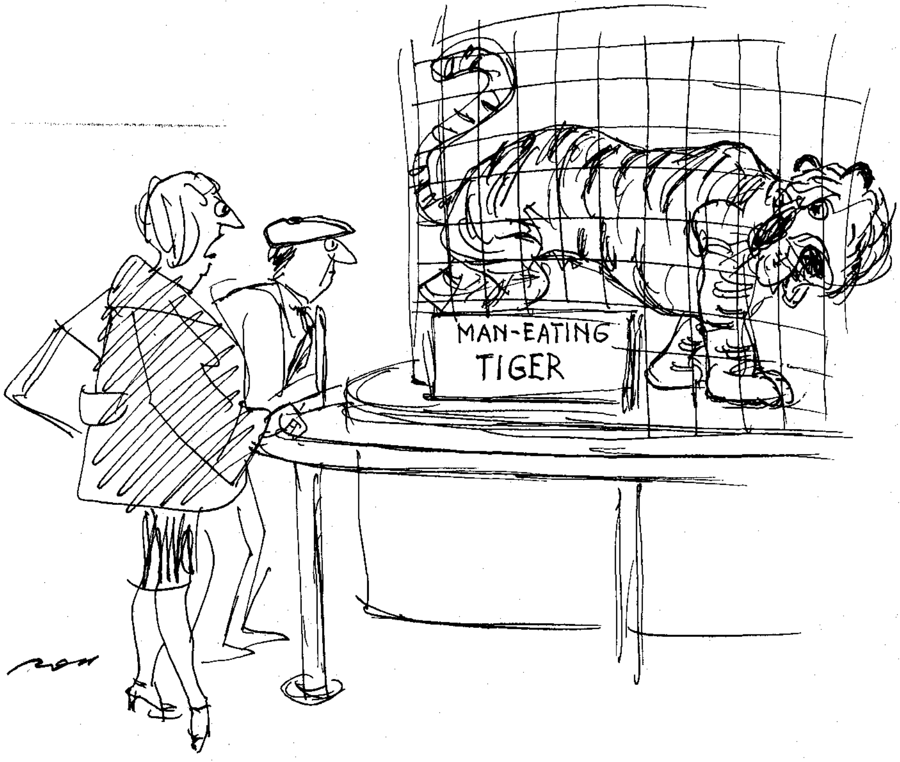


*"It's always men, men, men!"*

• •

tered for their own protection in a house outside the city. A few days later, the demonstrations spread to the city of Wuhan, about two hundred and fifty miles to the southwest, with chants of "Black devils," and to Beijing, where students of the Beijing Language Institute marched under a banner reading "NO OFFEND CHINESE WOMEN."

This banner was carried in the first demonstration I witnessed in China, and its racist nature made me skeptical about the student "science and democracy" demonstrations several months later which led to the Tiananmen Square massacre. The skepticism seemed to me to be shared by many Beijing residents I talked to—some of them recent students themselves. A number of them who were willing to grumble (in private) about China's "gerontocracy" also expressed misgivings about trading it for a "paedocracy," a government of the young, which was essentially what China became when the Red Guards ravaged China and Tibet during the first half of Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution. And it didn't seem to me that the students helped their cause among other Chinese in 1989 when several mounted an eight-foot-high portrait of Mao in the back of an open truck and drove it around Tiananmen and the city's principal streets. More of the onlookers I watched as it passed turned away than applauded it.

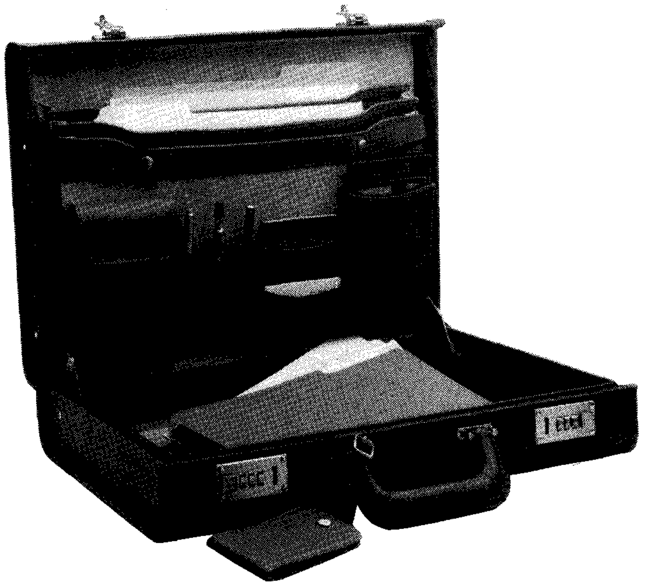
At the English Corner of Purple Bamboo Park, I also received something of a different perspective on the students—"God's favorites," the Chinese call them—who study at Beijing's sixty universities and college-level institutions. Most of those who gathered there last year on Sunday mornings had not been so favored, and admitted readily that they had failed the rigorous academic tests that China requires for entrance to state-run schools, but were persisting in studying English—at night schools, at private academies, or through programs of the Voice of America and the British Broadcasting Corporation. Although most were young, few of them expressed support for the demonstrations of the university and academy students (which isn't to say that many, or any, supported the subsequent Army attack upon them). In the views expressed by several, the true motive of "God's favorites" in demonstrating last year was to protest the revocation, on April 13th, of a State Education Commission promise that future graduates of the universities and academies would not have to accept jobs they were assigned by the state—as all other workers must. However, the revocation was not mentioned in the first list of the students' original seven formal demands, distributed in a leaflet on April 27th, when a hundred and fifty thousand marched to the square. The demands were that the government "correctly evaluate Comrade Hu Yaobang"; "give a true account" of two prior student-police clashes; guarantee press freedom and lift bans on publications and newspapers; publicize the assets and the salaries of the nation's leaders and their children; "control prices of consumer goods and check inflation and totally eliminate wrongdoings"; promise that there would be no reprisals; and open "a direct dialogue with the students."

The massacre of June 4th and the subsequent governmental persecution wiped out almost all of the organized student movement in China, but some of its escaped leaders have been attempting to carry it on from abroad. Other leaders are still missing, and Beijingers don't know—and don't expect ever to know—the identities of all those who were killed that day, or even how many died. As a witness to a minor part of that fighting, I estimated at the time that fourteen hundred had been killed, but I have seen estimates as high as five thousand. The official government figure was three hundred, including soldiers. Ignoring the discrepancy, the normally statistics-minded People's Republic has said only that a listing of those killed would be disrespectful to the victims' families. Rather, I suspect that it is reluctant to confirm what was widely reported abroad—that the bodies of many of those who died on June 4th were thrown into trucks and taken out of the city to be buried in unmarked mass graves.

Ironically, international reaction to the Tiananmen tragedy may have helped the government carry out part of one of the seven student demands—that it control the price of consumer goods and check inflation. During my trip this year, it seemed to me that the absence of tourists and the cutbacks in international business had finished what the government's austerity program began, in September of 1988. By mid-1990, the retail-price index of the state's Economic Coördination Bureau had risen no more than ten per cent, down from seventeen per cent a year before, and inflation is at its lowest level in five years. And, for once, foreigners got a further break, when, in December, the government devalued the yuan from 3.72 to the dollar to 4.71; however, most joint-venture tourist hotels immediately raised prices a commensurate twenty-four per cent. The final part of that student demand—that the government "totally eliminate wrongdoings"—has not been carried out, of course, but a serious, sweeping attack has been made on corruption: at least thirty-one "embezzlers" and "bribetakers" have been executed, and lesser punishments have so far been announced for some nine thousand government and Communist Party officers. Although official extortion has not disappeared, it does seem at the moment to have become less overt. The giving of "feasts" remains a traditional method of bribery in China, and in July of last year, to try to restrict the practice, the State Council ruled that banquets given for officials by state-owned industries or work units were to be limited to four plates and a soup. Last October, though, the *Science & Technology Daily* disclosed in an investigative article that the work units had responded by increasing the diameter of their banquet plates from ten inches to fifteen—large enough to hold two chickens instead of one.

The six other principal student demands of a year ago have certainly not been met. Hu Yaobang has not been reëvaluated; no account of the clashes between students and police leading up to Tiananmen has been offered; the Chinese press is even less free than before; the salaries of government leaders and their children have still not been disclosed; needless to say, no direct dialogue has been opened with any students; and, worst of all, there have been terrible reprisals against the student demonstrators and their supporters in what the government has now officially labelled a "counterrevolutionary rebellion." Just from reports in the Chinese media, Asia Watch has enumerated over six thousand arrests and forty-nine executions of those around the country who had taken part in pro-democracy demonstrations.

The numbers of arrests and executions that have not been reported are, however, believed to be far greater. One of the cruellest aspects of Chinese



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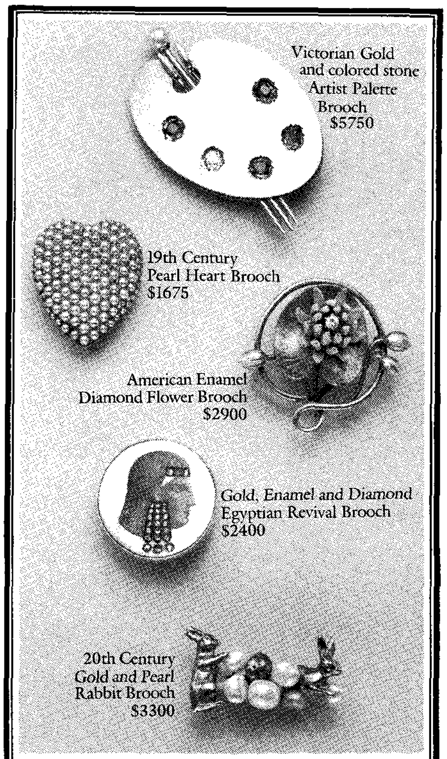

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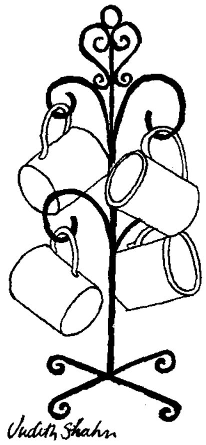
jurisprudence is that the families of those arrested or executed are rarely informed by police of what has happened. It may be that the government isn't informed, either. On May 18th of this year, Jiang Zemin, the new Communist Party general secretary, insisted in an interview with ABC-TV's Barbara Walters that "I don't think there were any executions directly related to the Tiananmen Square event." Nor did he tell her what had happened to the young student who has come to symbolize the fate of those who disappeared on or after that terrible morning. Tentatively identified (only in the Western press) as Wang Weilin, the student disappeared a few hours after he was filmed blocking a column of tanks which was maneuvering near Tiananmen. This footage, which received worldwide admiration, was never shown in China. Wang's friends have said that, several days later, they recognized him in a China Central Television picture of suspects waiting to be interrogated by police, but when Miss Walters asked Jiang bluntly if Wang had been arrested his response was "I think never killed." Perhaps not, but neither was he among seven hundred and eighty "people involved in last year's turmoil" whom the government says it has released, and his name is not among those of more than three hundred people believed to be undergoing "reëducation through labor" at the Tuanhe work camp, near Beijing.



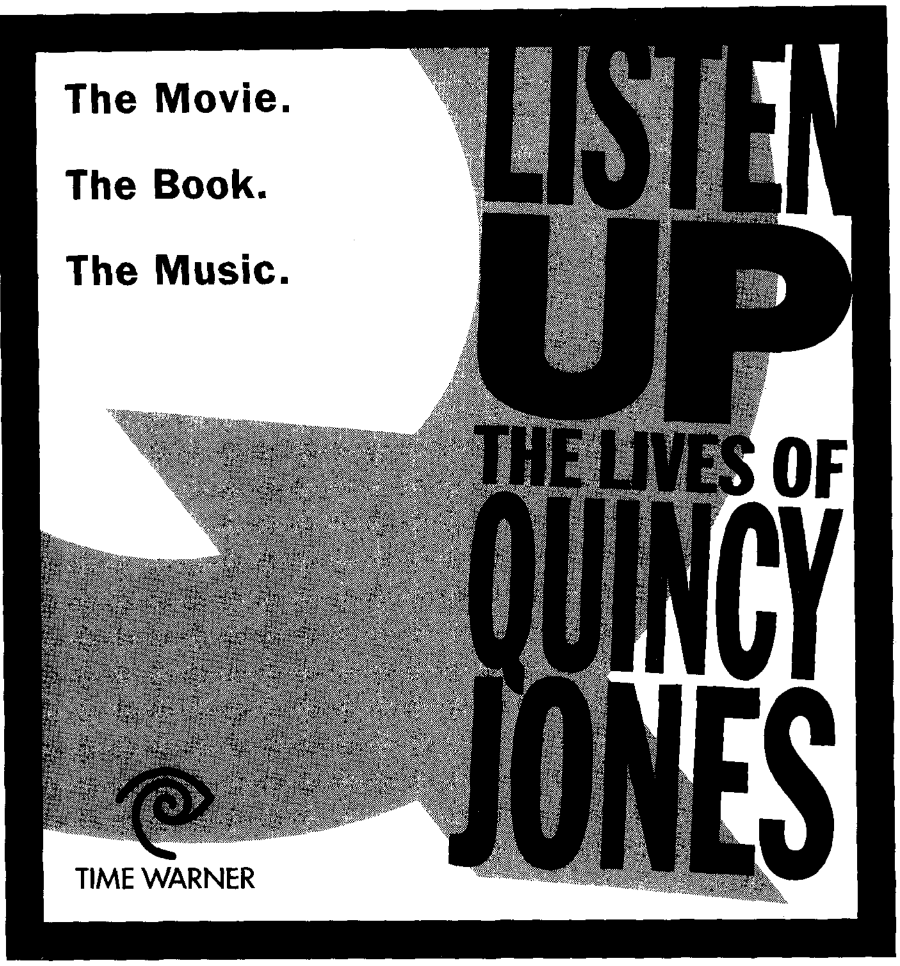
Officially, and on the surface, however, things seem easier now. An "anti-bourgeois-liberalization campaign" that had begun when I left a year ago has given way to a campaign to promote "social stability." According to the report of a national committee of judges and legal workers meeting in Beijing, social stability "relies on the stability and development of the national economy." And the national economy, although the conference didn't say as much, relies on foreign investment and tourists, who pay "foreigners' prices"—usually double the prices charged Chinese on all government-operated planes and trains and for services and most entertainment. Tourists and foreign businessmen are also required to buy—and spend—higher-priced money called Foreign Exchange Certificates, or F.E.C. During my two years in China, these specially denominated banknotes traded on the black market for as high as a hundred and eighty yuan renminbi (the official currency of China) for a hundred yuan F.E.C. This illegal "change money" rate dropped a third of its value, to a hundred and twenty renminbi for a hundred F.E.C., as the austerity measures took hold and as tourism itself all but stopped after last June 4th. Zheng Wanzhen, the Consu General in San Francisco, was quoted last May as saying that China had lost a billion dollars in tourist revenues in the past eleven months, and early this year the government's official Statistics Bureau reported a drop in foreign-investment contracts from a quarterly average of more than a billion and a half dollars over the first three quarters of 1989 to about a quarter of a billion dollars in the fourth quarter of last year.

China's State Statistics Bureau now says that foreign-investment contracts have more than tripled, to about nine hundred million dollars, in the first quarter of this year. The State Administration of Tourism says that six million four hundred and sixty thousand tourists arrived in the first quarter of this year, and that this figure was only ten per cent less than that for the same quarter of last year. Yet most of the tourist hotels I stopped at this year, in Beijing, Shanghai, Chengdu, and Lhasa, were sparsely occupied, and the F.E.C. rate held at a hundred and twenty. Still, China's upheavals have never kept foreign business or travellers away for long.

And, in fact, despite thousands of arrests, executions, and disappearances of student leaders and their supporters at and after Tiananmen, Beijing gives every appearance of having returned to normal—at least by the standards of China, which is accustomed to suffering much higher casualty rates in its revolutions and subsequent retributions: in the Taiping Rebellion, from 1850 to 1864; in the Boxer Rebellion, from 1898 to 1900; and in Mao's own Cultural Revolution, beginning in 1966. Last May, at a reception for former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, of West Germany, Deng acknowledged this relative leniency by declaring that "the students should not be blamed too much" for their demonstrations at Tiananmen, and adding, "The roots of the problems lie within the leadership and the Party." True, Deng was in effect only echoing an editorial that he must have approved in the *People's Daily* in January, but his remark took on major import the following day, by being entirely omitted from the extensive coverage that the Chinese press normally affords the meetings of its leaders with foreign dignitaries. It was reported only by the Western press.

Since the absence of something in the Chinese press is invested with at least as much significance as the news that is reported, the assumption among my friends in China was that Deng was sending a covert signal abroad that China would back off from prosecuting identifiable dissidents—as contrasted with the unknown "criminals" recently executed. And so far, at least, six of the twenty-one student leaders who were put on a "most wanted" list right after June 4th have been able to get out of the country. Their number did not include Wang Dan, however, who was No. 1 on the list and was erroneously reported (by me, among others) to have been killed at Tiananmen. Even so, Wang, who had been hiding out safely in the countryside, wasn't arrested until he returned to Beijing. Another of the better-known leaders on the most-wanted list, Zhai Weimin, was arrested in Beijing last May, but, in an interview quoted in *Time* before his arrest, Zhai claimed that he was being helped by a sympathetic Party member. I have heard speculation that the leaders may have decided that it would be easier to allow these dissidents to leave the country than to prosecute them.

Nor did the Communist Party get far with a purge of "hostile and anti-Party elements" (meaning those who opposed bringing in the Army against the students) in its own ranks, which was announced on July 25th of last year. Although the Party's forty-eight million members were required to re-register for Party membership and sit through reëducation seminars, and many had to write self-criticisms, by the end of the year only thirty-three thousand four hundred were reported to have been expelled, and not among them so far is Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party Secretary whom Deng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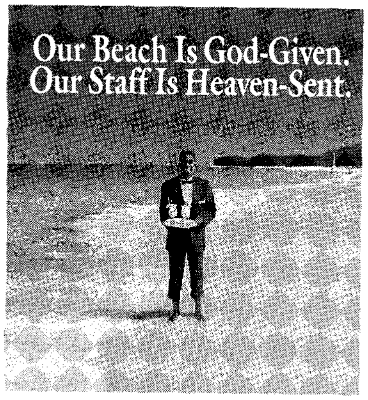
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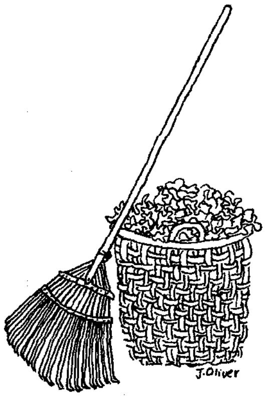
sacked for expressing sympathy with the student demonstrators.

Ultimately, China relented even on Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Shuxian, China's leading dissidents before Tiananmen, and this June 25th they were permitted to leave the United States Embassy, where they had taken refuge, and fly to England. After Tiananmen, Fang, an astrophysicist, was portrayed in the Chinese media as the inciter of the student demonstrations, and Li, a physicist herself and also a teacher, was said to have counselled Wang Dan. I had interviewed Fang and Li a week before the first student marches, and I don't believe that there is any truth in either charge, but it was not until three weeks after the anniversary of that so-called counterrevolutionary rebellion—when it became apparent that the Public Security Bureau had succeeded in confining memorial demonstrations to the Beijing campuses—that the Chinese Foreign Ministry consented to a face-saving concession: Fang and Li wrote a letter admitting that they were opposed to the Four Cardinal Principles of Chinese Socialism (adherence to the socialist road, the people's democratic dictatorship, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and Marxist-Leninist and Mao Zedong Thought)—just what they had said openly.

On April 12, 1989, when I interviewed Fang and Li, I asked Fang why he hadn't accepted an offer he had received to do research abroad. "That's not too difficult to answer," he said. "Everybody wants to make a strong impact on society. Doing astrophysics here, I have a strong impact on my society. Abroad I could have more publications, it is true, but not have so strong an impact on society." With the sequestering of Fang and Li, the mantle of dissident leadership appears to have then fallen on Hou Dejian, a thirty-three-year-old pop singer originally from Taiwan. Hou was in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, and negotiated with Army officers for the peaceful withdrawal of student demonstrators. He escaped from the square, and took refuge for more than two months in the Australian Embassy, then emerged to appeal publicly for the release of arrested dissidents. Together with Zhou Duo, an economist, and Gao Xin, a university lecturer, Hou called a press conference for May 31st, but the three were secretly taken into custody just before the scheduled hour. Zhou and Gao were simply held in seclusion for almost three weeks and released without charge, but the government found a more diplomatic way to silence the singer—within China, at least: public-security agents stopped a Taiwanese fishing boat in the Taiwan Strait and ordered its occupants to take Hou back to Taiwan.

The dissident who has most effectively demonstrated what China's current campaign for "stability" really means is Peng Rong, a graduate student who was arrested on May 25th after speaking at Beijing University, and putting up a poster, in support of China and against foreign economic sanctions. Peng was no novice—he was a leader in early student demonstrations last year—and his arrest made the point that he probably sought to make: no matter what the people say, the Chinese leaders just don't want them to have the right to say it. What had seemed to me on April 27th of last year to be the most reasonable of the seven demands that the student demonstrators made on their march to Tiananmen—the call for a "direct dialogue" with the leaders—appears in retrospect to have been the most radical.



The leaders of the People's Republic don't want to hear from their subjects, and they don't want to speak to them, either. Like the emperors, they choose to communicate with the Chinese people only indirectly, and preferably through symbols. A national symbol now being revived on billboards throughout China is the image of Lei Feng, a People's Liberation Army soldier known for selflessness in the service of his comrades and his nation. Lei died in an accident in 1962, at the age of twenty-two, and the following year Mao Zedong himself launched a Learn from Comrade Lei Feng campaign. It had become dormant, but after Tiananmen the current leaders decided that, despite its Maoist origins, it exemplified what they now wished to tell the nation. "Further develop Lei Feng's spirit under the new situation," Premier Li Peng wrote when he launched a new campaign for moral education, "and hope more Lei Fengs come forth in China."

There is one image that the government appears reluctant to see revived, that of Mao Zedong himself. The disestablishment of Mao as a symbol began a few years after his death, in 1976, when it became safe for Chinese to leave their homes without carrying their copies of his "Little Red Book" of quotations and without wearing the once mandatory Mao badges. (Mao books are still around, but it's hard to buy a Mao badge in China now.) It took longer for the tailoring that Mao favored to disappear from the streets; China is a thrifty country, and clothing, whatever its implications, is not readily discarded. The Mao suits that Deng Xiaoping always wears in public are also seen on high officials televised during important occasions (for example, the announcement of the declaration of martial law last May), but nowhere else now. The last Mao images to disappear were the hardest to dispose of. Until a few years ago, similar, if not identical, twenty-foot-tall concrete statues depicting the Chairman, hands clasped behind him, stared pensively through the gates of every Chinese university and every governmental office. In the mid-eighties, however, without prior announcement, workers showed up—usually sometime after midnight—and began dynamiting the statues off their bases, hoisting them onto flatbed trucks, and hauling them away.

Even though they cracked down on Peng Rong's unauthorized demonstration in support of China, the nation's rulers have not yet reached the point where they are willing to confirm publicly that it is they who are tearing down Maoism and Maoist icons; Mao Zedong Thought is still enshrined in the Four Cardinal Principles, and a portrait of the Great Helmsman still hangs from the Gate of Heavenly Peace. There wasn't much they could do, then, when mocking posters of Mao began appearing on dormitory walls and windows during the week preceding the June 4th anniversary and the minor campus demonstrations that marked it. "Some authorities may suspect that our feelings toward Mao are not genuine, but they can't order us to take the posters down," a student told a

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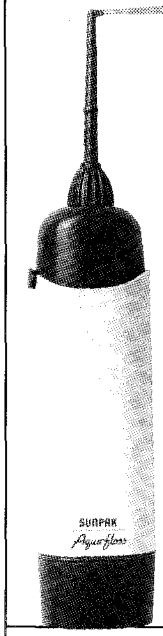

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Western reporter. "It's great satire." Another Party symbol flavored with more satire than Party leaders apparently enjoy is the "Internationale"—particularly the verse calling, in the Chinese translation, on "slaves and the aggrieved of this world" to "rise up and struggle for the truth." Last May, Yuan Mu, a spokesman for the Research Office of the State Council, suggested in a speech intended for publication that it appeared to be time to retire the anthem, but, according to the *Mirror*, of Hong Kong, Li Ruihuan, a Politburo Standing Committee member in charge of ideology and propaganda, prevailed upon the State Council to suppress Yuan's speech.

PERHAPS because their own press is so thoroughly under their control, China's principal leaders ignore it, and when they have something to say to the outside world they say it not to their own media but to American television. Jiang Zemin chose to be interviewed by Barbara Walters for the program "20/20"; his predecessor, Zhao Ziyang, talked to Tom Brokaw on "Meet the Press." In both cases, Chinese reporters were allowed to be present, and to print a transcript. But the closest that China's highest leaders come to speaking to their people directly is permitting television coverage (on tape, not live) of speeches they make to one another. The declaration of martial law in parts of Beijing was made by Premier Li Peng and President Yang Shangkun to an audience of Communist Party members hastily gathered on the afternoon of May 19, 1989, and shown on television that evening. Deng Xiaoping's speech, on June 9, 1989, defending Army force used at Tiananmen immediately became required reading at weekly or twice-weekly seminars held at all Beijing work units for the next month, but it was originally delivered only to generals of the People's Liberation Army.

Another oblique device that government leaders employ to communicate with their people is the announcement of domestic policies and achievements when the press is invited to the Great Hall of the People to cover a reception for foreign dignitaries—whose reason for visiting China, more often than not, has nothing to do with the announcement headlined in the following morning's *People's Daily*. Or, if an announcement is of an unpleasant nature, it may be posted (usually at night) by public-security officers on *hutong* walls. On arriving in Beijing last May, I found wall posters re-stating the requirements for residence in the city and warning that those who were found to have migrated there illegally would be rounded up and deported.

The phenomenon of farmers migrating to the cities is not unique to the People's Republic, but, given China's annual population increase, of 1.43 per cent, which puts the present population at a billion one hundred and twelve million, and a relatively small but continuing decrease in cultivated land—from two hundred and seventy-six million acres in 1957 to two hundred and forty-four million acres in 1987—the problem is probably more troublesome in China than it is elsewhere. There are said to be fifty million Chinese now in what is called the floating population—people who live away from their designated residences. A fortunate few of the migrants are given shelter by relatives or friends, but they still face being reported to police by the Old Aunties, or members of the ubiquitous Neighborhood Committees, which monitor every city *hutong*; other migrants simply camp out beneath overpasses or on the plazas of the railroad stations. Beijing deported two hundred and eighty-four thousand migrants last year, and the *China Daily* recently predicted that a hundred and two thousand more would "be asked to go home by the end of the year."

On the afternoon of June 14th, my wife and I had an opportunity to see how some of these migrants were being "asked to go home," as we waited aboard a train about to leave Beijing Railroad Station for Shanghai. Two buses pulled onto a platform directly opposite our "soft sleeper," or first-class compartment, and ten nightstick-carrying uniformed members of the People's Armed Police prodded from them about fifty men and women, ranging in appearance from moderately well off to ragged. A Chinese passenger in our compartment confirmed that these were deportees, who were probably to be put on another train. The officers from the nearer bus, gesturing with their short clubs, lined up all but one of their prisoners in three rows on the platform. The exception was a dirt-encrusted, and possibly deranged, young man wearing only torn pants and a tattered T-shirt: conceivably out of consideration for the others he was permitted to stand alone, against a platform column. Another man, who was very old, had to be carried off the bus on the shoulders of a younger man, and he crumpled into a heap as soon as he was set down on the platform. One of the officers approached and touched him with his club, but not roughly, and apparently ordered him to stand, but the younger man who had carried him interceded, and the old man was allowed to simply sit in his place in the ranks.

While this was going on, a well-dressed woman deportee—in her mid-forties, I'd say—was conversing with the corporal in charge. What impressed me about their exchange was how little rancor there seemed to be on either side. Indeed, all the guards appeared to be sympathetic to their wards, and those being deported seemed to accept their fate without resentment. The group stood like this for about five minutes, and then the corporal looked up and realized that they were being observed by the foreigners on our train. His response was to order the people back aboard the buses that had brought them. The old man was carried again, but the dirt-encrusted young man refused to move. First, he was prodded by the stick of one of the officers, then slapped, and finally kicked, all to no avail. At that point, the deportee who had carried the older man on his shoulders stepped in again. In the true spirit of Lei Feng, he put his arm around the recalcitrant young man and led him back aboard his bus. Both buses pulled out of sight a few minutes before our train started up. —FRED C. SHAPIRO

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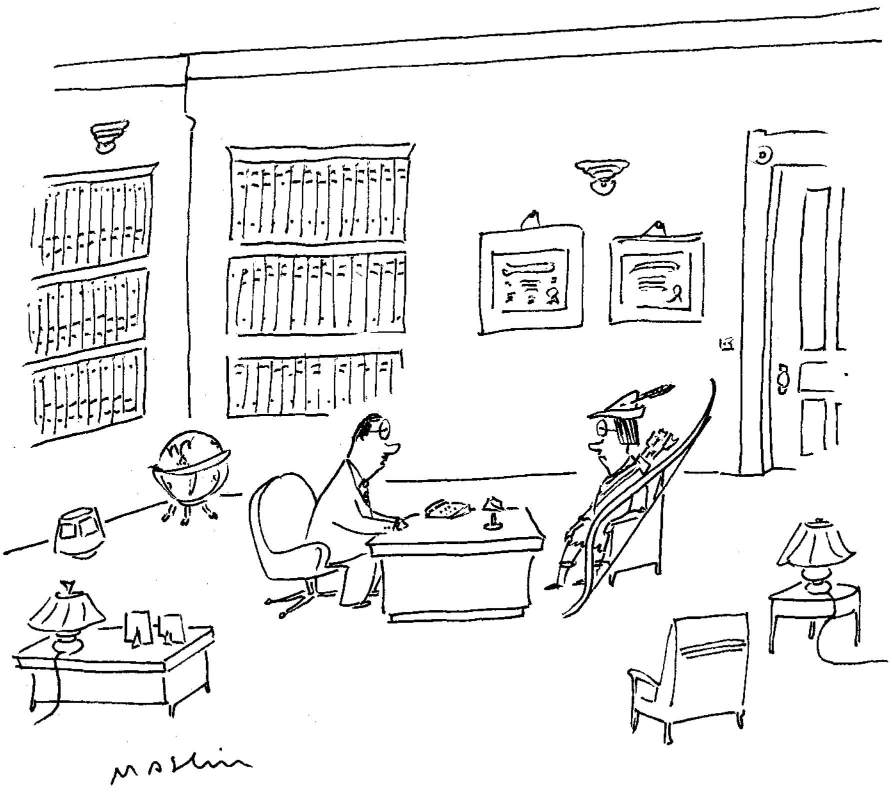
# MUSICAL EVENTS

## *Reanimations*

LAST week's Music Before 1800 concert, in Corpus Christi Church, was given by Sequentia, the Cologne-based medieval ensemble directed by Barbara Thornton and Benjamin Bagby. Its forces vary from program to program. For this one, "The Birth of Polyphony"—a pageant of organum (the adding of a second line to a plainchant) from its ninth-century indications to the great Gothic flowering in early-thirteenth-century Paris—seven singers came together: three Americans (Miss Thornton, Mr. Bagby, and Eric Mentzel), a Swede (Susanne Norin), a Canadian (Stephen Grant), a Scot (Colin Mason), and a German (Julian Metzger). Singing more beautiful than theirs is not to be heard today: pure, steady tone from open throats; supple movement through the phrases; pure intonation, with precise unisons and perfectly tuned intervals; verbal force and clarity, with vowels distinctly colored; rhythmic liveliness serving at once the sense of the words and the musical structures. Quite apart from the music, this was a demonstration that bel canto—beautiful, eloquent singing that by its sound can move listeners to rapture—is an art not lost.

Two days earlier, Sequentia had sung the concert at a Harvard conference honoring the scholar David Hughes: "From Rome to the Passing of the Gothic: Western Chant Repertoires and Their Influence on Early Polyphony." The Sequentia program showed modern music coming to birth, as the emotional effects of clash, concord, and counterpoint were added to a single line of speech lifted into song, and the new expressive means of rhythmic contrasts was explored. Wonderful texts. From St. Gall in the ninth century:

> Let rushing clouds, whirling winds, glitter of lightning and crash of thunder make a sweet concord: Alleluia. Let rivers and floods, rain and storms, tempest and calm, gleaming ice, snow, and frosts, meadows and groves join to sing Alleluia. Chime in, you various winged creatures, with a chorus of praise: Alleluia. Let the loud voices of beasts of all kinds reply with their Alleluia.



*"To answer your question. Yes, if you shoot an arrow into the air and it falls to earth you know not where, you could be liable for any damage it may cause."*

From twelfth-century Aquitaine, there were vernal melodies springing from and sustained by long sacred syllables. From Santiago de Compostela, solemn rejoicing for St. James's feast day. An Alleluia from the Winchester Troper, a Scottish Annunciation sequence. From Paris, Léonin's "Alleluia: Posui adiutorium"; Philip the Chancellor's biting, witty attack on Church cupidity and corruption, "Bulla fulminante"; and, finally, Pérotin's majestic setting of the same Alleluia. Forty years ago, when the Dessoff Choirs recorded a pioneering Pérotin program, the authors of *The Record Year* declared that the result would be "surprising to anyone who is unversed in medieval music, for the harmony has the closeness and angularity that most people nowadays associate with modern composers like Stravinsky and Bartók." Craig Wright, in his recent study of Notre Dame music, calls Pérotin "in many ways . . . the first modern composer," who "undertook a radically new approach to musical organization . . . to produce a brilliantly original form of musical architecture."

There is no generally adopted modern style for the performance of the medieval repertory (and "repertory" is hardly the word for music that spans centuries and ranged a continent). Much is speculative. The Hilliard Ensemble's account of Pérotin's "Posui adiutorium" on its Pérotin CD (ECM) is very different from Sequentia's: bathed in expansive resonance, softer in tone colors, yet closer to Steve Reich in its strict-rhythm dancelike episodes. With joy, musical instinct, and technical address, Sequentia brings the discoveries of scholarship to life. Each carefully planned and balanced program is a modern adventure through the rich past.

CARNEGIE HALL is celebrating its centenary season with an uncommonly distinguished parade of orchestras and soloists, ambitious programs, and commissions. The first orchestra from abroad was the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam—itself just over a hundred years old—which gave three concerts under its new chief conductor, the Italian Riccardo Chailly. The Concertgebouw has long been one of Europe's most distinctive orchestras, renowned for unstrained warmth of string tone, freely individual but not pushy wind soloists, and, in general, easy, unforced, dedicated excellence of execution. Mahler admired the orchestra; Strauss dedicated "Ein Heldenleben" to Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw. Its conductors have had long tenures: Mengelberg (whose vividly romantic recordings are resurgent on CD) fifty years, Eduard van Beinum fourteen (and fourteen before that as associate conductor), Bernard Haitink twenty-seven. The Concert Building itself, with its blind-arcade walls, coffered ceiling, gallery around three sides, and orchestra platform steep-tiered to the organ, has warm, spacious, "living" acoustics, and they must have played a part in creating the particular sound of the orchestra. But the players took that sound with them when they travelled: we heard it in Carnegie in 1978 in a memorable Beethoven cycle, and again at the orchestra's visit five years ago. On those occasions, Mr. Haitink was still the conductor, and the Carnegie acoustics had not been spoiled.

Things were different this time: the Concertgebouw sounded more like just another good orchestra, not its unique self. The new Carnegie acoustics presumably played a part. (Last season's damping of the platform surround and ceiling may have improved the sound a bit, but the body of the hall is still unresonant; it lacks life, presence, glow. Chords suddenly cut short drop dead—as in the "Semiramide" overture that opened the first Concertgebouw concert, as in the introduction to Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony, a few days earlier, from the Philadelphia and Riccardo Muti.) But there was more to it than that. The Concertgebouw and its new conductor make a strange match. Mr. Chailly is in musical action an extrovert, apparently concerned with rhythm, accents, energy, effects. (A long program biography stressed his busyness as a maker of records.) In Schumann's Fourth Symphony and in Mahler's "Song of the Earth" he introduced tempo changes far beyond those that the composers invite—not a matter for automatic disapproval, to be sure, since many inspiring interpreters (Mengelberg among them) have done the same, but unconvincing, displeasing when they seem unprompted by any inward necessity, any spiritual vision of the whole work. Mr. Chailly

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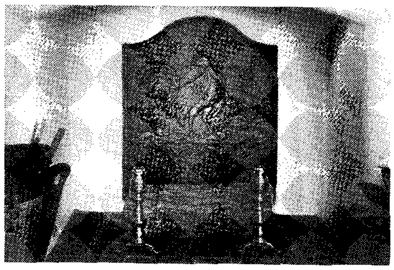

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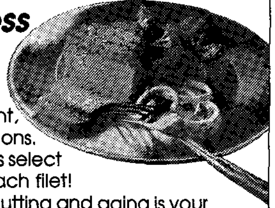

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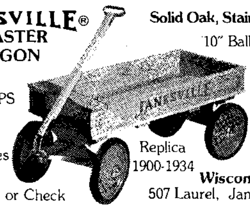

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did little in the way of dynamic shaping or adjustment, and in the Mahler he seemed not to care that the tenor soloist, Gösta Winbergh, was at times inaudible. The orchestra's merits were still apparent, however, especially in the naturalness of the string playing. In Mahler, the wind solos did not tell in the way that one expects with a Concertgebouw performance.

Luciano Berio's "Rendering," completed this year for the Concertgebouw, had its New York première. It is a curious exercise from one of our leading composers. He has scored Schubert's sketches for the unfinished Tenth Symphony and joined them up with what he calls "musical cement." The cement takes the form of a pianissimo blur, approximating to white noise, which is finely crosshatched with themes, scarce audible as such, from the sketches themselves and from other late Schubert (the B-flat Sonata, the B-flat Trio); a solo violin is kept busy. Schubert's Tenth Symphony, had he completed it, would have been a remarkable work: a first movement whose development begins with the second subject dropping from allegro maestoso to andante and darkening from A major to B-flat minor; a B-minor slow movement with a Mahlerian oboe melody over a slow pizzicato tread; a scherzo-finale that in formal ambition suggests the scherzo of Beethoven's Seventh and in contrapuntal charge the "Jupiter" finale. The sketches—they have been published in facsimile—are extensive but fragmentary, and they are difficult to construe. At least two other composers—Brian Newbould and Peter Gülke—have sought to expand them into a full symphony, and the results have been recorded. I wrote about the Newbould version after its Carnegie première, in 1986; it is a sensitive, skillful, and moving composition—a revelation of Schubert's last, great symphonic thoughts placed, without pretension, in a possible context. Unsurprisingly, the Newbould and the Gülke versions differ considerably. One reason is that it proves hard to guess Schubert's intended harmony from an unharmonized melodic line: how hard can be discovered by comparing the different harmonizations with which J. F. Barnett, Weingartner, and Newbould clothed such lines in their completions of Schubert's unfinished Seventh Symphony. Berio's "Render-

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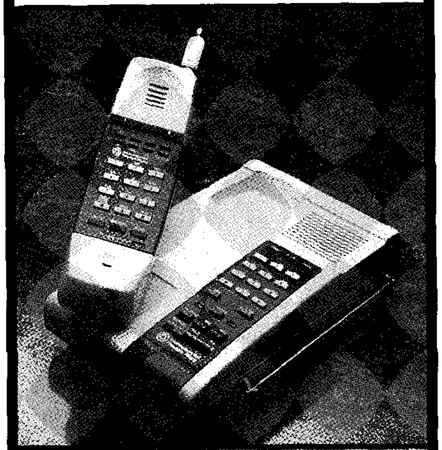
ing" makes no attempt to explore the implications of the sketches. Nor is it a new, thought-through, original Berio composition with a starting point in what Schubert left. I'm tempted to call it a lazy piece of work: straightforward scoring of the sketches; "cement" between them that sounds much the same at each recurrence. The effect of tonal Schubert suddenly going out of focus, fuzzing over, being lost for a while proves fascinating once or twice. The piece lasted nearly thirty-three minutes.

THE first solo recital of the centenary season was given by the Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin, making a belated New York début: he was nearly nineteen at the time of this appearance and has been internationally famous from the age of twelve. Mr. Kissin has played with most of the big European orchestras—including the Berlin Philharmonic, under Karajan, in Berlin and Salzburg. Among his many recordings is one of the two Chopin concertos that he played with the Moscow Philharmonic in 1984. Before the Carnegie recital, he played both concertos with the New York Philharmonic. I heard the second and thought it a most accomplished and poetic performance —without the charm and individuality of, say, a Krystian Zimerman but completely musical, unaffected, and "right." In Carnegie, he played Schumann (the "Abegg" Variations, the Symphonic Studies), Prokofiev (the Sixth Sonata), and Liszt ("Liebesträume" No. 3, the "Rhapsodie Espagnole").

Mr. Kissin entered the Gnessin Music School for Gifted Children, in Moscow, at the age of six and studied with Anna Pavlovna Kantor, who remains his only teacher. He listens to records a good deal, we are told, and especially admires Busoni and Arthur Rubinstein. He did not go on to the Moscow Conservatory and has not been groomed to win international competitions. In an interesting *Times* essay Harold Schonberg, who first heard Mr. Kissin seven years ago, in Mozart's concerto K. 414, suggested that "in escaping the conservatory peril" he has, unlike the prize-winner power pianists, "evolved his own style, and it is a style that looks back to a period where a controlled sonority, a singing line, power without banging, tempo modification and poetry were what the great Slavic Romantic pianists represented and what audiences expected." RCA has issued a two-disk CD album collecting five of Mr. Kissin's concerto recordings: K. 414, Haydn in D, Rachmaninoff No. 2, Prokofiev No. 3, and Shostakovich No. 1. The Prokofiev is a "live" Moscow performance, from 1985; the others were recorded in 1988. All are enjoyable (although the tempi of the Mozart and Haydn finales are perhaps a shade fast for the modern piano), and the Rachmaninoff, despite a rather thick recording, is outstanding —especially beautiful in the final pages of the slow movement. A single-disk issue of that concerto also contains Mr. Kissin's account of six of Rachmaninoff's "Études-Tableaux," and these represent some of the most remarkable playing he has put on disk, in their delicacy and fullness of feeling, combined with technical strength and grace.

In Carnegie Hall, Mr. Kissin gave secure, lyrically fashioned, but unremarkable performances of Schumann. Pianists evidently enjoy the challenge of Prokofiev's sonatas: they turn up often on recital programs, and the recordings available fill most of a column in the latest *Opus* (the successor of the *Schwann* catalogue). I know few people who enjoy listening to them. Sure, Prokofiev was a master pianist, and his writing for the keyboard is ceaselessly inventive. He was a brilliant composer; the symphonies, the concertos, the operas, the ballets do not fade. In the piano sonatas, there are moments, even movements, of high merit, but how readily the music becomes emptiness and clatter. Sometimes I feel I never want to hear any of them again—unless, of course, Sviatoslav Richter (who can transform them into poetry) is playing. Well, there is also Glenn Gould's remarkable recording of the Seventh, a rebarbative piece in most performances. Mr. Kissin's Carnegie choice, the Sixth, is generally reckoned the best of the series. There was elegance in the Allegretto, poetry in the slow waltz. The outer movements were spirited, their best ideas vividly realized, but they contain passages that tempted Mr. Kissin to play louder than necessary. In the Liszt, his merits shone at their brightest: the "Dream of Love" warmly emotional but not sloppy, the Rhapsody exuberant and glittering but not flashy.

—ANDREW PORTER



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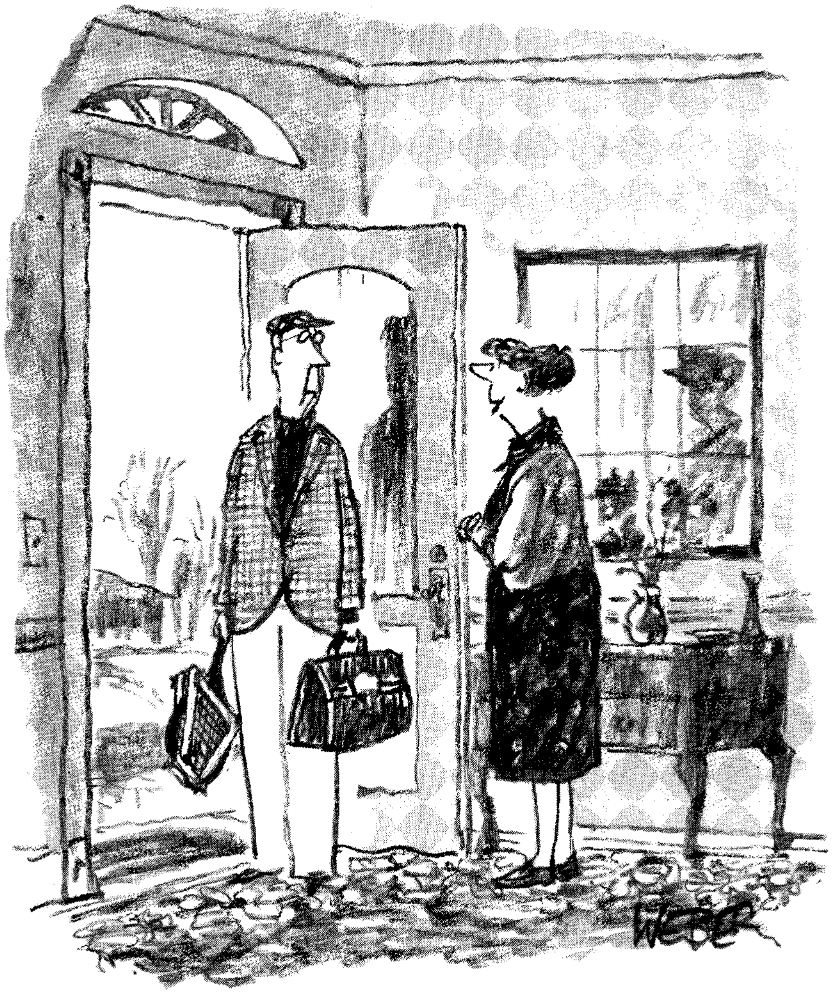
MERYL STREEP just about always seems miscast. (She makes a career out of seeming to overcome being miscast.) In "Postcards from the Edge," she's witty and resourceful, yet every expression is eerily off, not quite human. When she sings in a country-and-Western style, she's note-perfect, but it's like a diva singing jazz—you don't believe it. Streep has a genius for mimicry: she's imitating a country-and-Western singer singing. These were my musings to a friend, who put it more simply: "She's an android." Yes, and it's Streep's android quality that gives "Postcards" whatever interest it has.

This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to adore the daughter, who is wounded by her mother's cheap competitiveness. Nichols wants us to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. He keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.)

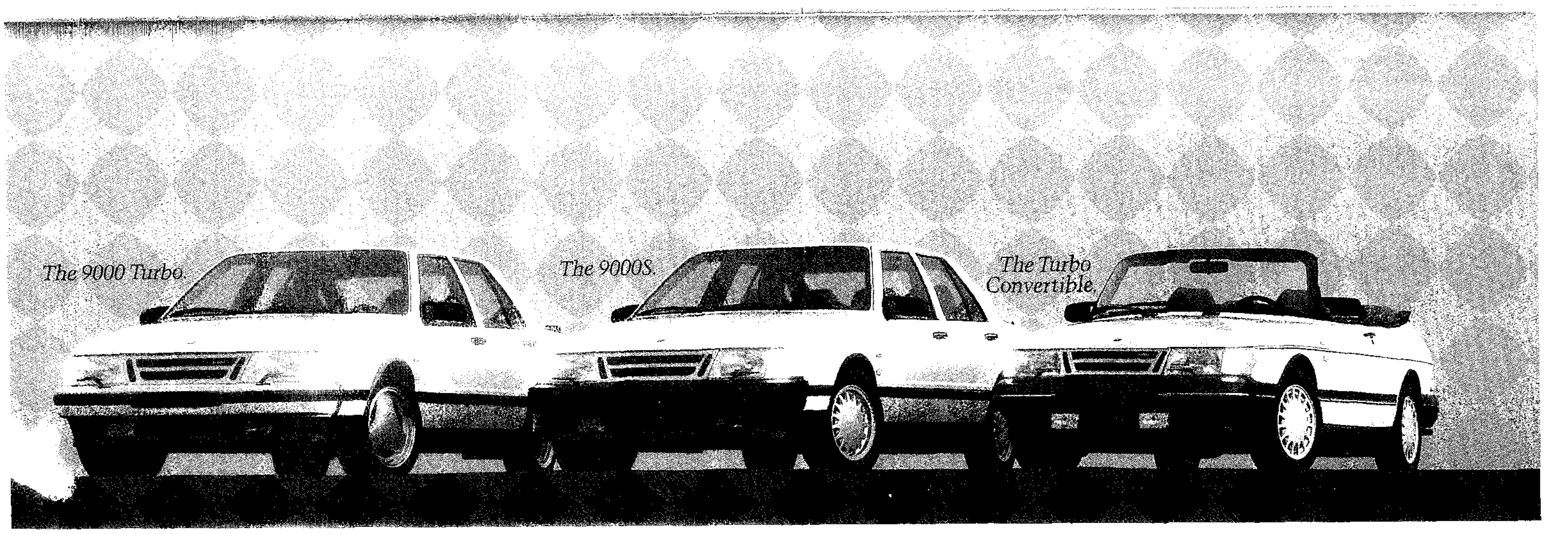
When the novel that the movie is based on—Carrie Fisher's semi-autobiographical account of her life as drug-addicted Hollywood royalty—was published, in 1987, Fisher told the *Times* that she hadn't wanted to write the kind of book about star parents (hers are Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher) that makes the child a victim. And she didn't play that game. But it's the game the movie plays. The script (which Carrie Fisher wrote, with Nichols' uncredited collaboration) has some funny, barbed lines, but, like everything else in the movie, they're shaped to show the daughter's self-deprecating courage and her superiority to the people she lives among. Streep's Suzanne Vale is a noble victim. She's also a talented singer, in contrast with her musical-comedy-star mother, who belts out Stephen Sondheim's "I'm Still Here" Vegas style, without a trace of musicality. Nichols directs Shirley MacLaine to overdo the mother's self-preoccupation; it's a blast-off performance—she's playing the stale essence of old show biz. Yet MacLaine has a reality that Streep doesn't have. The cartoon mother is meant to make a gut connection with the audience.

The tacky, bright-colored movie is watchable in the same way that Nichols' last film, "Working Girl," was. Once again, there are a lot of people to look at. Dennis Quaid, who plays the predatory lech that Suzanne falls for, is photographed in profile, so that he seems to be nothing but a big nose. He gives a forced, overwrought performance, and his core speech, in which he reveals what a pig he is, is played off Streep's sensitive face. The virtuous characters are just as extreme: Richard Dreyfuss is pure niceness as the doctor who courts Suzanne, and Gene Hackman is a stern but fair movie director—a man of weight and authority who serves as a father figure to her. Hackman manages to give his lines a personal rhythm—he makes his scenes halfway credible.

Two women in the cast draw the audience to them: Robin Bartlett, as Suzanne's roommate in a drug-rehab program, and the striking Annette Bening, in the role of an actress who has been cast as a lowdown hooker. (For a few seconds, Bening is so alive she seems to run off with "Postcards.") Streep does well with the ballad made famous by Ray Charles, "You Don't Know Me," and she does one tiny thing that gives you pleasure: in a slapstick routine, she hangs on to a



*"Just as a point of curiosity, dear, do you have any pictures pasted up in your locker, and, if so, of what?"*



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ledge at the top of a tall building and lifts her hands in a lovely shrug.

The camp intensity that Nichols gives this newfangled, near-plotless version of a woman's picture is what makes it play. (It's this confident showiness that made "Working Girl" play better than his earlier "Heartburn.") You see how many obstacles Suzanne faces, and you watch her (like the Working Girl) overcoming them. Nichols loads the scenes with banal revelations—"insights." The mother is seen as competing with the daughter, but the daughter is never seen as competing with the mother. "Postcards" is like "Mildred Pierce" told from Ann Blyth's point of view. It's also a variation of "Now, Voyager": Suzanne Vale is first cousin to Bette Davis's Charlotte Vale, who escapes her repressive mother by going to a rest home. In the new therapeutic terrain, the ditzy mother and the smart-ass daughter get to know themselves (and each other) better. They're both troupers, and when the detoxified daughter hits the comeback trail the mother cheers for her. The movie reneges on everything it has said it was about, and it even provides the heroine with a fine, upstanding man waiting in the wings. Nichols doesn't go all the way with camp except in a hospital scene where the mother is shorn of her wig and photographed mercilessly without makeup; for a minute, Nichols tops the humiliation scene in "Mr. Skeffington" (when pieces of Bette Davis's curly coiffure fall on the dance floor). Even here Nichols is slippery. The scene is presented as sympathy for the shrivelled old lady, and admiration of her tough spirit.

There's a deep jadedness in this picture (and in "Working Girl") that can pass for sophistication. Nichols appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. The assumption of "Postcards" is the assumption of the tabloids: that all any of us really want is to be movie stars, and we despise the ordinary Joes who aren't rich. The movie brings out the part of us that feels bitchily superior to our own lives. If Nichols were up front about what he was doing, we might enjoy his pissing on the yearnings of squares, but "Postcards" is jadedness pretending warm good will. There's an element of the gracious host in Nichols: he keeps retreating into taste.

The key scene is the Hollywood party where Shirley MacLaine's hairless old trouper in her red wig barks "I'm Still Here" and flashes her undies. The party guests love her style, and even the daughter, watching her, marvels. Nichols is saying, "You may be appalled, but the whole culture loves this stuff, and maybe I do, too." At the end, he's got Streep belting. Glamour and contempt are all mixed up in Nichols' work. He's acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.

THOSE of us who have had years of being pestered by stickler landlords or gouged by self-righteous ones may not work up much sympathy for the San Francisco lovers played by Melanie Griffith and Michael Modine in "Pacific Heights." Their attempt to join the propertied class is thwarted by a sicko scam artist (Michael Keaton), who takes over one of the two rental units in their Victorian house and calls the police when they try to evict him. This situation might have been sly fun if the director, John Schlesinger, and the scriptwriter, Daniel Pyne, had tempted us to root for the tenant with the perverted legalistic mind and the fiendish cupid's-bow smile. It's a drag that we're expected to identify with the dull young couple, who are meant to be idealized versions of ordinary people like ourselves. I don't know why the invader tenant hauls around a big collection of telephone books, or why he twiddles with razor blades, though I suppose that could be a character point —to indicate a streak of sadism. But then I don't even understand why he wants to sue the couple and "take over" their newly acquired house, since it's mortgaged to the hilt, and their equity in it can't be a staggering amount. (The plot is loonier than the tenant.)

What we see isn't really a thriller—it's more like an executive decision to make a thriller. That appears to be how Schlesinger approached the material. He has his professionalism—it shows in the clean, efficient staging. And he gives the film an expensive look; he puts money on the screen. But he scares you only by making you nervous. He might have come closer to the traditional fun of thrillers if he'd developed some momentum and given us more of Keaton, whose knotted forehead suggests a tense, screwed-up little boy. The movie picks up a gleam of interest when we learn about the tenant's wealthy background, and we get a bit of a kick when he plugs Modine. Keaton has a way of being blandly still when the character is at his deadliest; he's pretty silky, but with a little help from the writer and the director he could have been a memorable creep, like Robert Walker in "Strangers on a Train."

For most of the film, Schlesinger tries to get us to care whether the young landlords are going to stay alive to make their mortgage payments. Modine's short-tempered frustration may be believable, but it's not amusing; there's nothing smoldering in this guy —he's just a virile stupe. Griffith seems meant to be a smart, loving professional woman, right out of the pages of an up-to-the-minute women's magazine. Her funky-little-girl voice was a tease in films such as "Body Double," "Stormy Monday," and "Something Wild"; here it's wearying. (If it's her only voice, she ought to be damn careful how she's cast.)

The film's pleasures are few: the most energetic scene is a quick, happily irrelevant satire of the Home Shopping Network on TV, and you may find yourself grateful for the vistas from the top of Potrero Hill (not Pacific Heights), where the 1886 house is located. A promising cast—it includes the uncredited Beverly D'Angelo, and Laurie Metcalf, Dorian Harewood, Carl Lumbly, Mako, Tracey Walter, Luca Bercovici, Guy Boyd, and Tippi Hedren as rich Florence—is all but thrown away. And Schlesinger has some puzzling lapses: for example, the camera circles dizzyingly during a conversation between lawyer and client. So it's rather shocking that he's willing to lay claim to "Pacific Heights" by doing a Hitchcock turn: in an elevator scene, he appears as the menace who turns out not to be the menace. Actually, he is the menace. He's foisting his boredom on us.

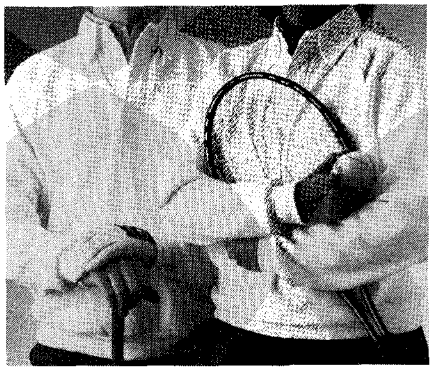
WHEN Barry Levinson writes and directs autobiographical material, he catches the rhythms of grouchiness, of irritation, of preening in the commonplace remarks that people make all the time. He's especially virtuosic at catching the sound of people who know each other too well: they've bored each other and picked at each other for years, but they always stop just short of drawing blood. Levinson has a gift for turning this everyday small talk into comedy routines. He makes familiarity funny, and when his work really clicks, as it did almost all the time in "Diner" (1982) and now and then in "Tin Men" (1987), it delights audiences in a true-to-life way. But, because of the homely nature of his comedy, when it doesn't click it reverts to tiresomeness. His new film, "Avalon," a multigeneration epic, limps back and forth.

In legend, Avalon is an earthly paradise. Levinson uses the name as his Rosebud: it's carved into the façade of the Baltimore apartment house where the five Krichinsky brothers, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe before the First World War, make their first American home. From there the four surviving brothers move into brick row houses, where they live side by side and raise their children. During the week, they work as wallpaper hangers, and on the weekends they play waltz music at neighborhood parties. To Levinson, Avalon seems to represent his family's participation in the American dream, with cousins, uncles and aunts, grandparents and parents mingling in a convivial, quarrelsome atmosphere. It's what Levinson looks back on as a golden age: twenty-six relatives would sit down for Thanksgiving dinner, and at family-circle meetings the Krichinsky brothers would agree to chip in and put up the money to bring over destitute kinsmen. The film is set mostly during Levinson's childhood, in the late forties, which he sees as the period when the golden age begins to crumble—when his parents move to the suburbs, and TV breaks up the clan's social patterns, and the brothers have divided into feuding factions.

"Avalon" begins as a lulling reverie about the relationship of the boy Michael (Elijah Wood), who will grow up to be Levinson, with his paperhanger grandfather, Sam Krichinsky (Armin Mueller-Stahl). I don't find Sam as endearing as we're meant to. He's one of those life-spirit, storyteller characters, and he has too much Old World soul for me. It's Sam who makes the points that Levinson wants to put across; he's full of canny wisdom. And Sam's sweetness to the boy throws the movie into a wilted dreamland. There's a moment when old Sam, playing a melancholy piano étude, says that the boy should take lessons, and I thought, Good, why don't you try to teach him, so there can be a bone of contention here—some of the friction of the real world.

It's a relief to have an immigration story that isn't all pain and hardship; "Avalon" is unabashedly about people who prosper. But Levinson has honeyed the past (and made it look like his film "The Natural"). Early on, there's a comic tinge to Sam's feeling that the time of his arrival in Baltimore, in 1914, during the Fourth of July fireworks, was the high point of his life and of the nation's history, too. After a while, we seem expected to believe that it really was a high point of innocent expectations. Then we're shown the post-Second World War period and the subsequent decades of desecration. There's a wide streak of fuddy-duddyism in Levinson's notion that the family used to be the bulwark of the nation's value system. It may seem unfair to say this, but at times the movie seems like a product of the cultural wing of the Republican Party—a lament for those bygone days when mothers stayed home and watched over their children, and children obeyed their parents, and so on.

There's one character, as played by Elizabeth Perkins, who never buys into Levinson's vision of how great that past was: Ann, his mother, who lives with her in-laws, Sam and Eva (Joan Plowright), during the early years of her marriage and can't stand their ritual bickering. Listening to the perpetual spats and complaints at family-circle sessions, she's so bored she's a bundle of tiny frazzled nerves. The conception gives Perkins the chance to sustain her whole performance as a precise, marionettelike turn; the stylization becomes Ann's ticky personality, and Ann embodies more truth than the film's thesis. She wants to be with



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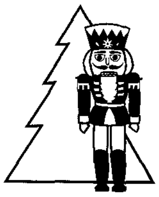

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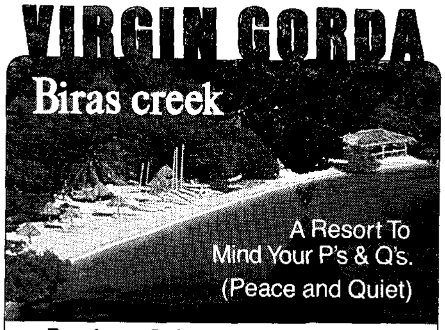

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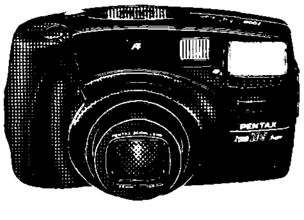

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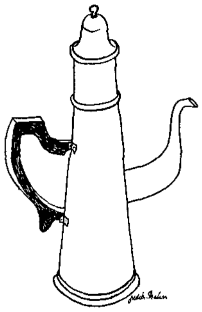
her husband, Jules (Aidan Quinn), and her son Michael; she wants some freedom from the immigrant generation that's been running her household. Living in an extended family, Ann is practically stiff from repressed annoyance, but she's too decent and too timid to explode. She walks around dumbfounded by her mother-in-law's interference with the smallest details of her life; at times, she might be shaking water out of her ears. Plowright plays the abrasive mother-in-law as a woman who's impervious and well satisfied with herself. She imagines she's jovial. (Plowright isn't allowed enough range, and her performance is a shade too realistic to be funny, but her shiny shoe-button eyes suggest the tenacity of the woman. She's formidable.)



Aidan Quinn's voice has an emotional timbre that's effective when Jules talks to his wife, Ann, or their son Michael. It's so emotional I never believed he was the glib, natural salesman we're told he is, but he's persuasive as an affable, responsible family man. When Ann—really harried—blows off some steam and pleads for help, Jules is evasive; he's not going to get caught between his wife and his mother. His specialty is keeping the peace. Quinn's Jules also matches up convincingly with his business partner and opposite number—his careless, risk-taking cousin Izzy, who is played by the West Coast standup comic Kevin Pollak. This comic has the inflections to pep up his lines; he's a true Levinson actor—he's like a slightly older version of the boys in "Diner."

The movie tries to get by with a catchall construction, and it includes such elements as the arrival of Eva's brother Simka from Nazi Europe. It's easy to see why Levinson thought he needed to darken the texture of the story, but it's already overlong. There's also a likable but out-of-the-blue episode: the cousins Jules and Izzy have a double wedding, which is celebrated at a little night club Sam runs—a hot-jazz night club with black entertainers. This interlude isn't related to anything else in Sam's character, not even his love of music. If he had this jazz-loving side, wouldn't it have spilled over into his grandfatherly scenes with Michael or his arguments with his wife? The Sam we've been watching is a European moldy fig.

There are scattered fine moments. When the old brothers sit on a bench together, they themselves are like row houses. The image of Aidan Quinn working his way down a row block selling out of a suitcase recalls an earlier time effortlessly, and every time Elizabeth Perkins twists in discomfort she gets to us; she's in the tradition of Jean Arthur. Levinson shows skill in his handling of Elijah Wood as the alert little Michael and Alvi Myerovich as the minuscule patriarch. And Lou Jacobi is frighteningly forceful as touchy Gabriel Krichinsky, who never forgives his younger brother Sam for ordering the Thanksgiving turkey cut before he arrives. But overwhelming financial success (of the kind Levinson has had with "Good Morning, Vietnam," of 1987, and "Rain Man," of 1988) often turns people into pundits, and Levinson is preaching his own brand of bourgeois fundamentalism. He embraces the family as a cure for social ills. I think he got caught up in a fantasy about rise and fall and began forcing his material to fit an epic pattern. (Has his family declined? I bet it's thriving.)

At Levinson's worst, he's as insistent as the Plowright character. He doesn't play fair with Ann: her desire to be free is linked with being brainwashed by TV. The scene of the Thanksgiving with twenty-six relatives spilling from the dining room into the living room has its rhyming contrast: a few years later, Jules and Ann and young Michael have Thanksgiving dinner on three tray tables while they watch "The Aldrich Family." We're expected to cluck with horror, but the film's attack on TV is so righteous it can make you want to defend TV: the show that the three were watching may have been more entertaining than "Avalon."

This movie is an elegy to a mythical past. That's probably why people emerge from the theatre sniffling. They've been told they're suffering from soul-sickness—the loss of unity, harmony, family music. Under the closing titles, Sam plays the piano sadly, reflectively. And if you close your eyes you can see Levinson airlifting himself onto Mt. Rushmore.

—Pauline Kael

# THE THEATRE

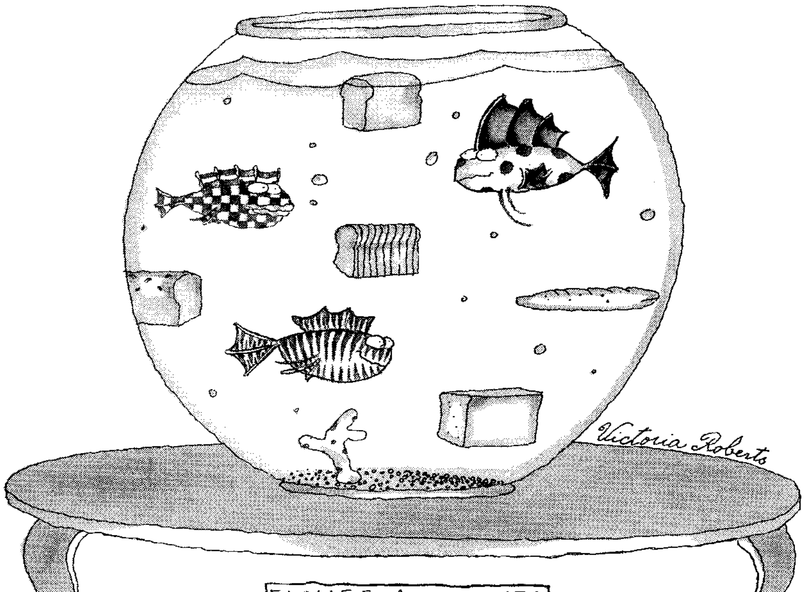
## *Two of a Kind*

Tom Cole's "About Time," at the John Houseman, with Audra Lindley and James Whitmore, can most quickly be described as a conversation piece, the conversation being that of a very old couple in a condominium. The action, such as it is, begins at breakfast time, with Mr. Whitmore, seated at the kitchen table behind the *Times*, asking for coffee. The coffee is made and in plain sight, but Miss Lindley joins him at the table empty-handed and -headed, and brightly chatters about events in the news and about chopping vegetables and some missing sour cream and other homely matters. She eats a piece of bacon off his plate, removes the empty plate, and then replaces it, still empty. Chopping vegetables assumes the status of a theme, which he interrupts from time to time with just the word "coffee."

"About Time" appears at first to be just another gag-studded comedy about silly old people. It's a comedy, all right, but under a lot of the fooling is a serious undertone of self-disgust and impatience as two first-rate, cultivated minds unravel; the couple seem to be ice-skating over a pond of panic. They pull themselves up occasionally by playing word games of their youth, and they talk of Dylan Thomas and his drinking, and of literary drinking in general. There is no question that she is flakier than he is, and she drives him crazy. He even calls their son, in California, to tell him so, and gets small comfort. Yet when he sinks into momentary misery at what he considers his failure in life, it is she who rescues him, by reminding him that he managed to send his two children to college and graduate school. Then, suddenly, she finds the sour cream in the refrigerator, and just as suddenly the subject of oral sex comes up, and they're off! The experiment is so successful that there is some talk of saving at least some of the ravioli that she has prepared for dinner for further encounters. Spirits soar, self-confidence returns. The joke is startling and certainly risky in this context, but somehow it is not abrasive.

Inconsequential, and somewhere between a play and a vehicle, Mr. Cole's conversation piece is a far cry from Noël Coward. Yet the lines do the job, and, under Tony Giordano's deft direction, the performances are delightful. One question: how old is this couple meant to be? Their mental disrepair and an allusion to a mild insult delivered from him to her in 1924 would lead one to believe that they must be in their late eighties or early nineties. They certainly don't look it. Admirable scenery by Kent Dorsey and lighting by Mr. Dorsey and Neil Peter Jampolis; costumes by Christine Dougherty.

—Edith Oliver



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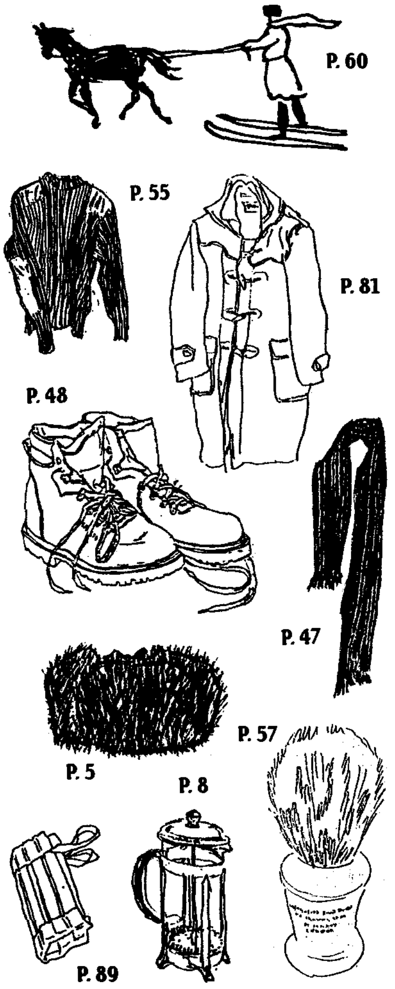

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# A CRITIC AT LARGE

## I GOT A SONG

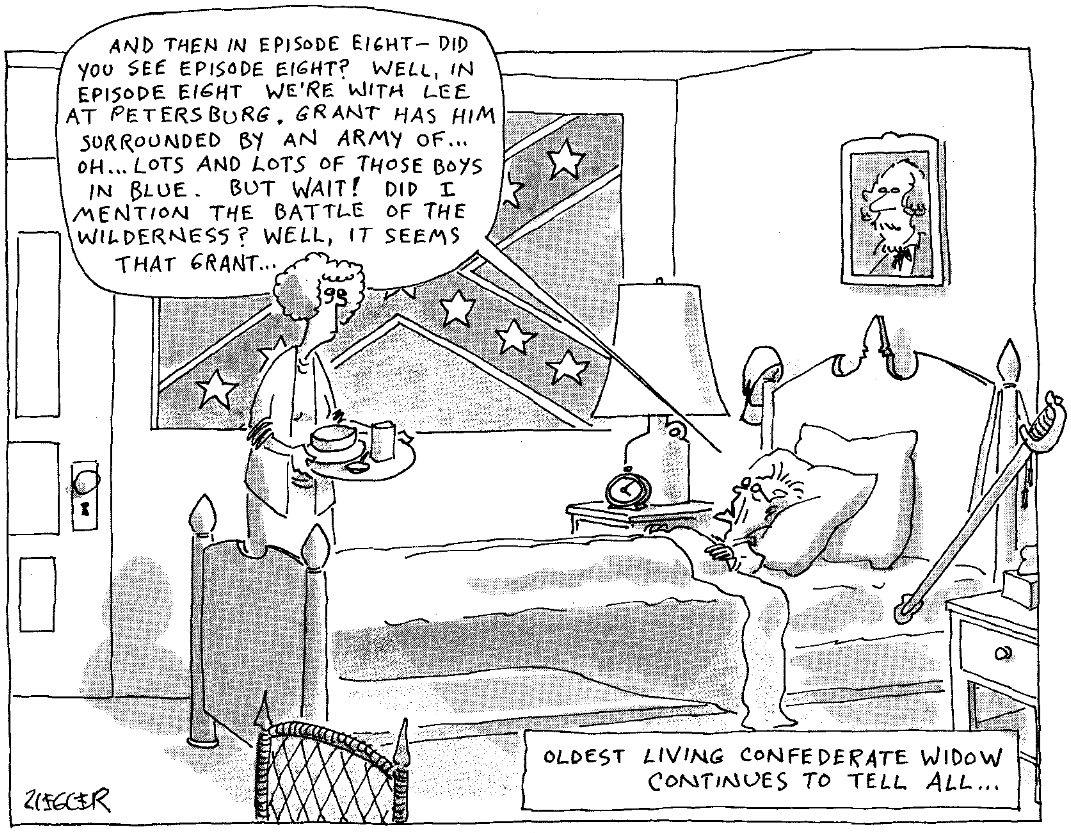
"J'Y'ALL stop for melons?" Judy Garland asks Johnny Downs, Betty Grable, and Patsy Kelly as they pull up at her farm in their old rattletrap. This is the first line she utters in her first feature-length film—"Pigskin Parade," released in 1936. Actually, they're looking for a champion to lead Texas State University's football team against Yale's Bulldogs, and, this being a college musical of the mid-nineteen-thirties, they immediately find one in Garland's older brother, Stu Erwin, who can hurl melons at gridiron length.

Garland, who was then fourteen and was billed ninth in the credits, appears barefoot and in braids and rustic dress (she's upgraded to contemporary teen when she and Erwin hit the campus) and runs through the picture telling strangers, "I can *sing!* Ya wanta hear me?" They generally have more pressing matters to attend to, but she is on the bandstand for the inevitable new-dance-sensation number, "The Balboa"; she stirs up the departure of the Texans' Yale-bound train with "The Texas Tornado"; and she leads the pregame solemnities in New Haven with "It's Love I'm After." There's not much more to Garland's role. She's there for the music. The other actors worry about the plot: Jack Haley coaches the team; Patsy Kelly, as his wife, provides cynical commentary; Stu Erwin beats Yale; Johnny Downs, Betty Grable, and Dixie Dunbar evince school spirit; Grady Sutton doesn't; Arline Judge vamps anything in pants; Fred Kohler, Jr., is a musclehead fullback; and Elisha Cook, Jr., gets hopped up on radical militancy and heaves a brick through a bank window.

Films like "Pigskin Parade" were not ideal launching pads for a movie career. A staple of the first ten years of the talkie, the college musical—basically Hollywood's appropriation of the characters, plot, and attitudes of the 1927 Broadway musical "Good News!" (itself filmed in 1930)—was an automatic B movie, a minor attraction involving second-line performers. The eighteen college musicals that Hollywood released in its heyday, between 1929 and 1938, are in form and outlook virtually interchangeable: teachers are idiots, students major in Applied Romance, the big game (invariably football) must be won or civilization as we know it will perish, and everybody lives on music. "College Rhythm," "Old Man Rhythm," "Varsity Show," and "College Swing" are typical titles. Movie buffs enjoy them because they are dotted with freak fun and obscure production numbers, but except for Dick Powell and Bing Crosby one seldom finds a genuine star in this territory.

"Pigskin Parade" is something of an exception in that it is very funny and very musical, to say nothing of its future star content. Watching Arline Judge move in on Fred Kohler, one student says, "I wonder what position she plays on the team," and another replies, "She's the drawback." The students have only to demand a song and Anthony (later Tony) Martin will slide into the casually irresistible "You're Slightly Terrific." Why not? College musicals are about music, not football. Thus Martin's solo not only may but *must* be followed by a Dixie Dunbar tap routine, which reminds us that before the age of the star choreographer each dancer worked up his or her own style. (Dunbar's is impishly leggy, a kind of physical pun on her short stature.) And thus the big game is less exciting than "The Balboa," one of the few dance songs that actually instruct you ("Take three steps and then you kick"). It feels, for its two or three minutes, silly, yet momentous. This is good music and good fun.

So Judy Garland is in apt company. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer had signed her the previous year, 1935, but couldn't figure out how to use her, except in a short, "Every Sunday," with Deanna Durbin, about two kids saving threatened weekend band concerts with their singing. To get something back on its investment, Metro


AND THEN IN EPISODE EIGHT—DID YOU SEE EPISODE EIGHT? WELL, IN EPISODE EIGHT WE'RE WITH LEE AT PETERSBURG. GRANT HAS HIM SURROUNDED BY AN ARMY OF... OH... LOTS AND LOTS OF THOSE BOYS IN BLUE. BUT WAIT! DID I MENTION THE BATTLE OF THE WILDERNESS? WELL, IT SEEMS THAT GRANT...
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sent Garland to Twentieth Century Fox for "Pigskin Parade," and, ironically, Fox knew just what to make of Judy Garland: she's the hometown kid who attains self-realization when she's performing. Her great moment—her prototypical one, really—is at the train station, heading for New Haven. Athletes, cheerleaders, and more or less everybody else in the cast are on board, the principals massed at the rear of the caboose. If this were a melodrama, the police would be searching the train and George Raft would be on the lam. If this were a screwball comedy, Irene Dunne would be in disguise and Cary Grant would be missing. But this is a college musical, so we're going to get a number. "I got a song," says Garland. "Can I sing it?" "Well, would it make you happy, honey?" Johnny Downs asks. Garland says, "Oh, it sure would." Downs cries, "Then you *sing it!*" The crowd cheers. And that's Judy Garland, right there—that need to show her talent, that informality of approach, that innocence ("I got a song") mated with a mild insecurity ("Can I sing it?"). It almost doesn't matter that her delivery of "The Texas Tornado" has an energy and confidence and power rare in an adult, let alone a fourteen-year-old; that she gives the line "Won't it be great to sail into town?" the pulse of a valiant challenger arriving in the victory zone; or that her punctuational "*Yeah!*" toward the end is explosive—a kind of kibosh on Yale that catches in a single syllable all the drive to win admiration and develop the ego-shaping self-assurance which the early movie musical was obsessed with.

One feels a curious shiver on encountering this pure and untextured Garland, on looking in on her before her name became evocative of a characteristically American kind of success-failure saga—another life without a proper last act, like the lives of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Marilyn Monroe, Orson Welles. Garland's tale is especially gripping because she, like most great movie personalities, is always with us. She had the luck to work for M-G-M, the studio whose so-called Freed Unit produced a series of musicals that film historians and buffs have sanctified—the studio that, by chance, has been the most energetically rehabilitated in the nation's video shops and on television stations. She is closely associated with

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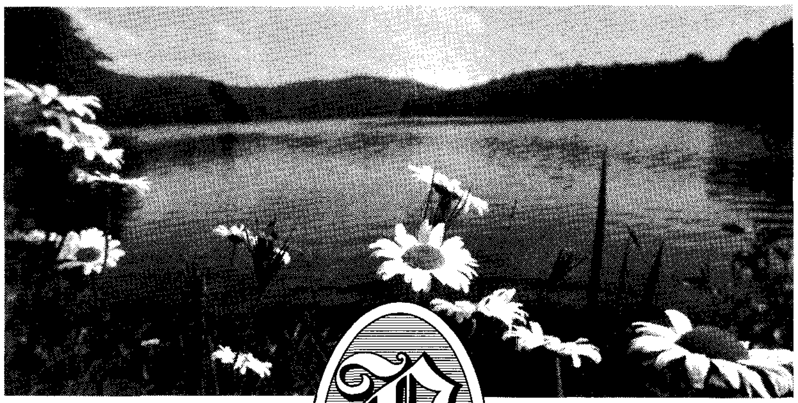

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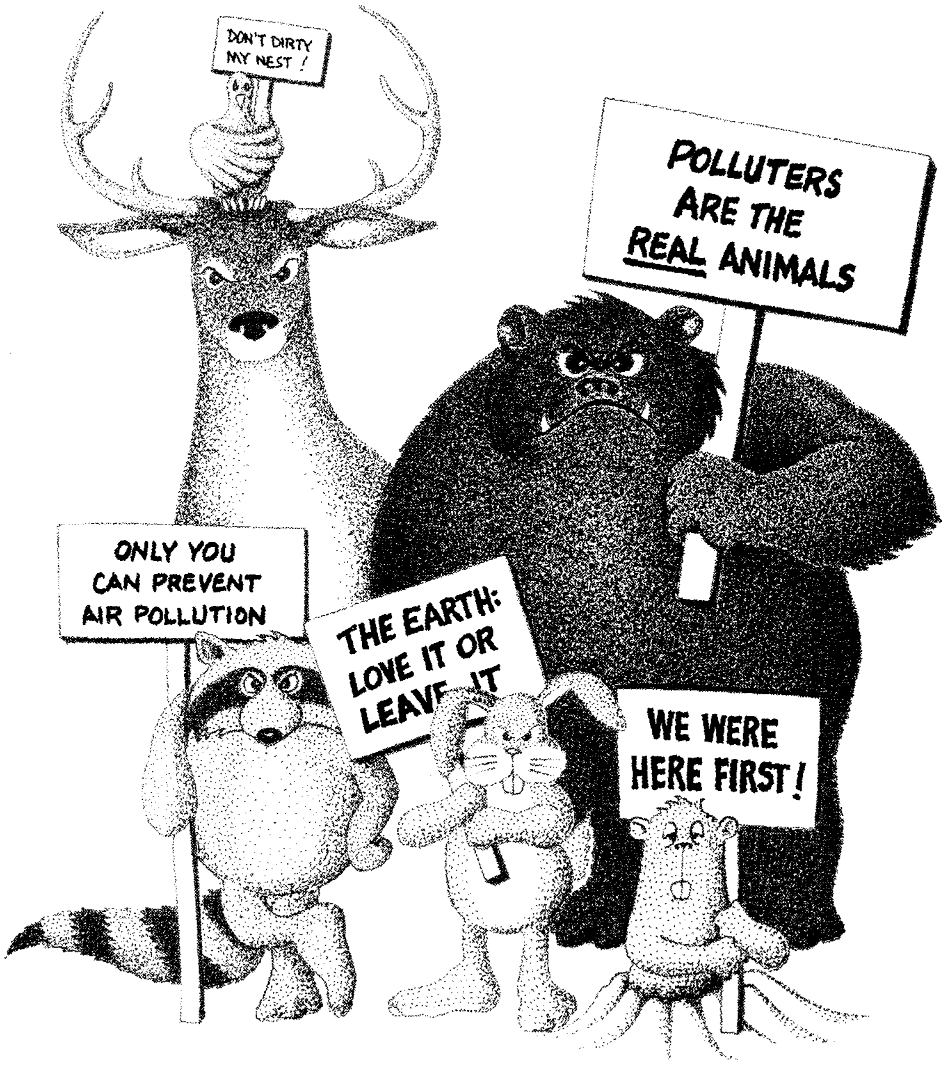
what is probably the best-loved movie ever made, "The Wizard of Oz," which was recently reissued for home viewing in a restored and amplified tape that is rapidly becoming standard fare on the American family's VCR—the movie our children are raised on. She is one of the few practitioners of "old time" pop music who sell well on CD—a significant statistic in an age that is increasingly turning back from rock to the traditions of Tin Pan Alley. She left a daughter, somewhat in her image, to carry on her work. She is constantly retrieved, reëmbodied: in last year's fiftieth-anniversary celebrations of "The Wizard," in the Broadway staging of "Meet Me in St. Louis," and in Christmas mountings of "The Wizard" in London, by the Royal Shakespeare Company—revivals that make her seem all the more a presence because she cannot be duplicated.

She can be invoked, and she has inspired a sizable library, ranging from personal reminiscences to Gerold Frank's deadpan biography (of 1975) and Christopher Finch's more pointed career study (of the same year), with another full-scale biography in the works. Lately, the chroniclers have been turning serious, as in Ronald Haver's valuable "A Star Is Born: The Making of the 1954 Movie and Its 1983 Restoration" (Knopf), of two years ago, or in two books published this fall—Coyne Steven Sanders' "Rainbow's End: The Judy Garland Show" (Morrow), an arduously detailed backstage report on Garland's television series, and Emily R. Coleman's "The Complete Judy Garland: The Ultimate Guide to Her Career in Films, Records, Concerts, Radio, and Television, 1935-1969" (Harper & Row). The last is not only ultimate but detailed to the point of dementia: an appendix without a book. Every possible manifestation of Garland is noted, from her "Vitaphone Kiddies" one-reelers to her singing of a single line of "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?" on Johnny Carson's show in 1968, when the guests (we learn) included Bennett Cerf, Monti Rock III ("rock 'n' roll singer," Coleman helpfully puts in), and the Philadelphia Mummers Band. The wealth—or, at any rate, the amount—of data is staggering. The book has the usual errata—incorrect song titles, wrong dates, hasty assessments. (Coleman calls the Texas State varsity of "Pigskin Parade" a "hillbilly football team," though except for Stu Erwin the squad is remarkably preppy for Texas.) Still, the very appearance of such books, from major publishers, tells us how primary Garland remains in the culture.

Garland is one of the most personally available of the American show-biz avatars—not a curio, like Al Jolson, or an antique, like John Barrymore, but someone strangely familiar, permanently contemporary. She died twenty-one years ago and started asking "Wanta hear me?" fifty-four years ago, when Jolson was still thought timely and Barrymore (as Mercutio) was spry enough to steal M-G-M's "Romeo and Juliet" from its stars, Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer. Yet to watch Jolson or Barrymore today is to enter a museum; Garland is ageless. That she will ever become a curio or an antique seems unlikely, partly because of the vital sense of mission in the characters she portrays, and partly because of her extraordinary singing style, so individual yet so uneccentric. What other movie star was so intense in telling us what she needed to do, yet so amiable while doing it?

Garland's mission was to sing. That was how she would win, be admired, earn self-respect. It came through so clearly in "Pigskin Parade" that, back at M-G-M, her employers wrapped her career around this wonderful wish to make music. Her next film, "Broadway Melody of 1938" (1937), held her to supporting status. (In fact, she had been interpolated into the piece because of the enthusiasm of a studio coterie.) Fox, the home of Will Rogers and John Ford, thought nothing of introducing Garland as a barefoot kid, but Metro stars-in-the-making don't hail from watermelon farms, so for "Broadway Melody" Garland becomes a theatre brat—"born in a dressing room, raised in a wardrobe trunk," her mother, Sophie Tucker, proudly avers. And ready, anywhere, to put over a song. When the producer Robert Taylor won't audition her, she revs up his waiting room with the spectacular "Everybody Sing"—the first time Hollywood shows us the incantatory effect of Garland's talent. The bandstand crowd in "Every Sunday" had been appreciative, but there Garland had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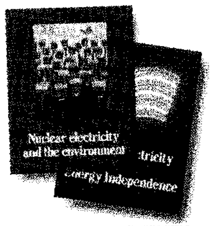
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shared the modest honors with Deanna Durbin; and in "Pigskin Parade" she had been somewhat taken for granted—no reaction shots tell us what the well-wishers seeing off the Texas Tornado make of this fourteen-year-old belting out a colossal war song in swing time.

In "Broadway Melody" M-G-M asks us to consider Garland's youth and musicianship. She turns up in a Buster Brown outfit, bearing an all-day sucker, looking much younger than she looked at Fox. Then that mouth opens, and everybody sings. Throughout the nineteen-thirties, pop music kept telling us how therapeutic a song could be, and Garland observes the cliché in the line "You can't go wrong with a song in your heart." Yet the voice is so pleasing and the phrasing so ardent—hear the way she mounts a summit on the word "song" before sliding conclusively down to "heart"—that, for once, we discern the wisdom in the therapy. Taylor's office erupts into an eisteddfod. "Get into that swing!" Garland urges, and the other unemployed actors pile in, solo and in chorus—in a do-re-mi scale, a snatch of "Sing Before Breakfast" (from "Broadway Melody of 1936"), and a hepped-up "Sing a Song of Six-Pence"—as if to say that music is all around us, *available in a* hundred different forms, and needing only the mobilizing power of a Garland to get it going.

Then something happens that is so impromptu, so authentic, that one scarcely believes it's in a movie. Sophie Tucker, till this moment content to beam in the background, takes the stage for a snatch of "Happy Days Are Here Again" as Garland looks on. But Garland cannot just stand by respectfully. Tucker *moves* her. Garland, seeming to see to the very source of the song, shows us how special Tucker is by putting an arm around her shoulder, bowing her head, and blinking, awed, at two generations' worth of show-biz smarts and glamour. Garland isn't merely playing Tucker's daughter; she's being Tucker's fan, a fan of great music. Garland not only likes to sing; she likes to listen.

Already, Garland is more than a singer; she's a presence. Nevertheless, from this point on, M-G-M concentrates on what Garland can do, and after "Broadway Melody" she fills the place with music. Films that would otherwise have been all-talking, no-singing dramas, such as "Thoroughbreds Don't Cry" (1937), "Listen, Darling" (1938), and "Love Finds Andy Hardy" (1938), take on song spots for her. Her persona is developing, not only in the way she relates to the characters she plays but in the studio's exposition of the image it wants her to project. Above all, she will be supportive, loyal, and inspiring to her friends, if not necessarily th first-place winner herself. "Thoroughbreds," for instance, is primarily the tale of an English boy (Ronald Sinclair) who rides a racehorse to victory, and supplementarily the tale of his friendship with an arrogant jockey (Mickey Rooney). Garland's job is to sing and dance "Got a Pair of New Shoes" up and down the halls of her aunt's boarding house for jockeys. Yet it is Garland who brings Sinclair and Rooney together, and when the boys' paths diverge it is Garland who reconciles them. She is not only musical; she is needed.

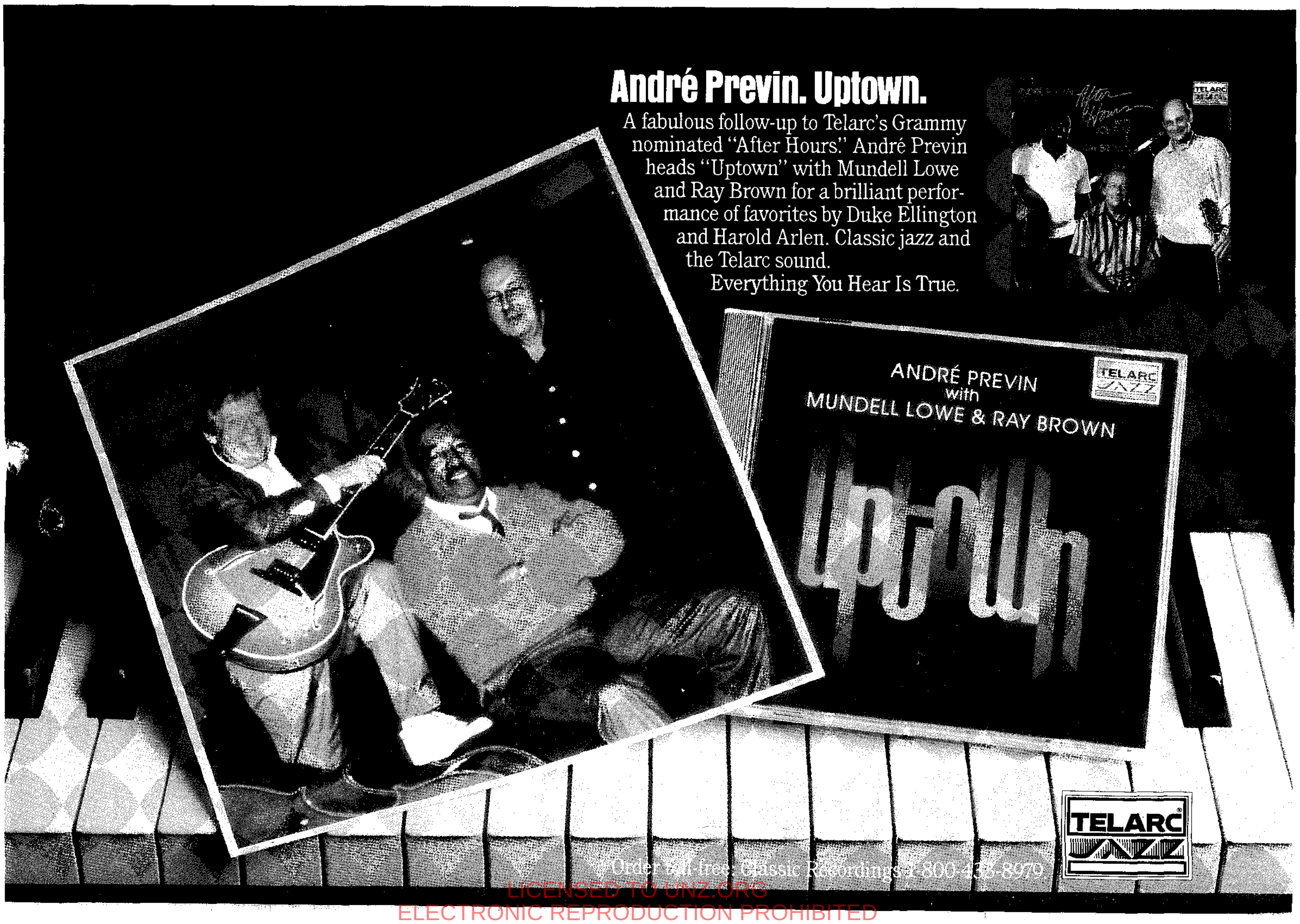
And she is a rising star; Metro is building her. In "Everybody Sing" (1938), her fourth feature, Garland is billed third in the opening credits (after Allan Jones and Fanny Brice) but *second in the closing* credits, and when the film opened at the Capitol Theatre in New York she was billed first in the ads. Note, too, that the film is named after Garland's big number in "Broadway Melody of 1938."

"Everybody Sing" is one of the few screwball comedies that are also musicals; the *Times*' critic complained that "the chief trouble is that everybody sings." But, of course, that's the joy of a musical—the music spreading through it. It's the screwball atmosphere that is the problem here. The picture is a second-rate "My Man Godfrey" grafted on to a cheap Warner Brothers backstager. So "Everybody Sing" would be only a statistic today if it were not for Garland's participation and the way the picture articulates what M-G-M saw as her salient characteristic: her emphasis on pop as the only acceptable sound for American music. Garland happened onto a scene—the American movie musical—that had not quite decided what was reputable in its musical style. The movies, never having recovered from their origin as inexpensive recreation for workers and immigrants, eternally sought redemption in Broadway stars, venerable novels, eminent writers—and opera. Or, at least, "The Road to Mandalay" bellowed by a baritone. The movies needed class, and that was where Lawrence Tibbett and Grace Moore and Jeanette MacDonald came in, and why so much operetta was going on. Operetta was like opera, only bearable. People took their families to [illegible], and critics condoned it.

Sure enough, "Everybody Sing" opens at the Colvin School for Girls, during a dutiful rendering of Mendelssohn's "Spring Song." But when the sour-looking teacher leaves the schoolroom Garland leads her classmates into a hi-de-ho slamdown entitled "Swing Mr. Mendelssohn." This is not mischief, not rebellion; she simply can't resist. When she's caught at it, the headmistress expels her, saying, "You've corrupted this school for the last time." And Garland is playing a kid named Judy.

M-G-M means it. This is who Judy is: the singing teen who doesn't respond to all that fancy Carnegie Hall noise but lives on the energy of street music. *Swing.* "Mr. Mendelssohn's had his day," Judy notifies her Colvin classmates. "Benny Goodman is here to stay." Garland is hep, natural, *now.* Her studio made an obsession of Garland's demotic style. In "Thoroughbreds Don't Cry," she is first heard practicing a Chopin prelude on the piano, then ragging it; here, in "Everybody Sing," almost everything she does points up the distance between pretentiousness and pop—when she jives "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" (in blackface); when she takes part in the "Rigoletto" quartet revamped for tenor (Allan Jones), belter (Garland), comic (Reginald Gardiner), and dubbed girlfriend (Lynne Carver); when she invokes a mythological homestead in "Down on Melody Farm"; and when she turns up in Southern-belle costume (complete with pantaloons) to ask the musical question "Shall I sing a melody of birds on the wing? Shall I sing of love and spring, or shall I sing of *swing*?" (the orchestra hits in solid) "Hey, *swing!*" (hotter yet) "Ah, SWING!" (with the soundtrack as a kind of ecstasy). Amid all the screwball connivings, Garland centers the film, sorting through its backstage gallimaufry to discover a theme—and, incidentally, define her character. Again, she is the singer, but, more important, she specifies the song, our American kind. Swing isn't corrupt—*opera* is; it's foreign, old, not our sound. Get into that swing.

It is as if Garland had been chosen to exorcise all the classical matter that had sometimes excited and sometimes wearied moviegoers in the nineteen-thirties. As if M-G-M's having lost Deanna Durbin to Universal had led the studio to put forth Garland as an antidote to Durbin's classical mixtures, her no doubt uplifting but possibly unintelligible "Quando m'en vo" and "Ah, fors'è lui." In Garland and Durbin's "Every Sunday" short, their styles were shown to be complementary, the one singing American pop, the other "Il Bacio," and the two girls braiding the two styles together at the finale, Durbin maintaining a conciliatory coloratura over Garland's jive. But now Garland's swing is combative. It defies Durbin and Universal. Metro has apparently just realized that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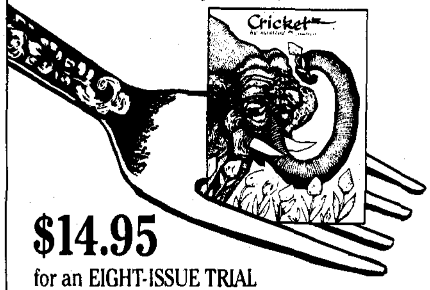

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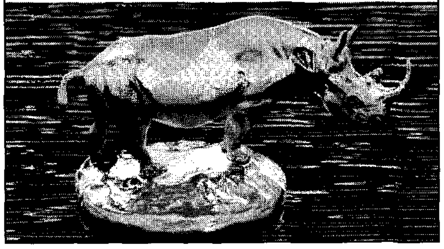

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A scene in "Ziegfeld Girl" (1941) affirms that realization for us. "Here's the kid that's gonna knock you right in the eye!" Charles Winninger announces as he presents his daughter, Garland, to Ziegfeld's casting deputies in another of the Broadway-audition scenes that Hollywood morbidly delighted in. Winninger is old-style—all moxie and ad libs, the bravado of the second-string headliner. "C'mon, honey," he urges Garland. "Louder and bigger does it." Also, "Hook 'em right in the gills." He cuts into a ragtime backup as Garland shoves forth Winninger's idea of "I'm Always Chasing Rainbows," awash with extra notes and "let me tell ya" fill-in lines on top of a ferocious gaiety. It's grotesque, and the casting people stop her. "Don't you know they quit beating a song to death ten years ago?" one says. "You don't slug an audience from the front nowadays. You kind of sneak up on them from behind." But a showgirl (Lana Turner, as it happens) dashes up to urge them to give Garland a second chance—without Winninger's assistance, beyond the reach of vaudeville. Garland, this girl senses, is really living in the present. Let her show them.

The orchestra is waiting. "Just—just a little slower, please," Garland says, the "little" an attempt to reduce her father's shame yet at the same time underlining the stylistic shift that separates Winninger's traditions from Garland's destined public. Her rendition is not going to be merely slower. It will be smoother, cleaner, and genuine: pop with the intensity of opera.

"I understand," says the conductor, perhaps a father himself.

And out rolls the song, excruciatingly assertive before and movingly grand now. Garland doesn't perform it as much as grace it, and poor old Winninger, still sitting at the piano, seems to us like a corpse. But so, by 1941, he was. His knock-you-in-the-eye show biz was deceased, and Judy Garland was what was being born. Garland squeezes the shaken man's shoulder from behind as she sings, in an attempt to hearten him, but his art is over and, for all her sympathy, Garland is the reason.

GIVEN that Garland had this power when she was barely into her teens, we have to wonder what her sources were. Surely no talent produces itself absolutely; every artist has derivations. The fact is that Garland had been on the stage virtually all her life, as the youngest of three sisters from Grand Rapids, Minnesota, drilled by a backstage mother into a respectable song-and-dance act. The family name was Gumm, the act was the Gumm Sisters, and young Garland was Frances Gumm. Garland's mother was her first artistic director, and, because Garland's father operated movie theatres, Frances must have had relatively unlimited access to early musical films. She was six and a half in early 1929, when the first all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing movies appeared, so by 1935, when M-G-M signed her, she had been able to take in the first minigeneration of Hollywood's musical stylists, from Al Jolson to the understated crooner, from opera ladies to Alice Faye. Add to this the ubiquitous record player and the 78 pop single, and we get a fair idea of what styles of singing may have influenced the adolescent Garland.

We know that she greatly admired Sophie Tucker, and so we turn to Tucker's many records. But the two singers have virtually nothing in common. Tucker, whose career began in the very early years of the century, belonged to vaudeville's grand manner—the louder and bigger and hook-'em-right-in-the-gills school, in which a song is put over through turmoil of personality rather than sheer melodic mastery. Garland was a sweetheart singer, in tune with her songs to universalize them, while Tucker personalized. Tucker was tough, randy, and demanding, a red-hot mama—the last of the breed, she often promised. Along with the comic novelties ("Old King Tut") and Dixie songs ("There's a Cradle in Caroline," "That's Where the South Begins"), Tucker featured astonishingly candid hymns to her prowess in love. The typical Tucker number is an instruction manual in the arts of courtship: "You've Got to See Mamma Ev'ry Night or You Can't See Mamma at All" or "Papa, Better Watch Your Step." No—at any rate, few—torch songs for Sophie. She's always in control. Her idea of a "love dies" number is the robust "Some of These Days," the most definitive of her several theme songs (she chose it for her solo spot in "Broadway Melody"), in which she does not cry for her strayed lover but warns of *his* rue to come. Like her close contemporary Mae West, Tucker makes sex a metaphor for gender equality. Promiscuity is a statement, insatiability a rebellion. "He's ever-ready," Tucker purrs of "My Extraordinary Man," and when the band joins in on the refrain she laughs and warns, "I'll take care of you boys later." Suddenly, in the spoken introduction to "Too Much Loving," she declares, "You men make me *tired!*"—to which her accompanist and sometime composer, Ted Shapiro, replies, "Yeah, yeah. Men make *you* tired!"

Thus, Tucker inhabits her songs, portrays the woman performing them. Garland simply presents songs. Tucker is a character, referring to herself by name. Garland is anonymous, pure music. Moreover, Tucker for the most part declaims the lyrics till she reaches a final glorious and fully voiced phrase, even a single final voiced note. Garland invariably sings the pitches. Still, we see why Garland looked up to Tucker. In her titanic way, Tucker is endearing—and she has a strong sense of rhythm, which must have appealed to Garland, the spokeskid of swing. It is said that Garland fancied her own rendition of "Some of These Days"—never recorded, unfortunately, except for a few lines in a medley. All the same, as "Ziegfeld Girl" observed, there is a complete break, a historical demarcation, between Tucker's style and Garland's.

We find another potential clue in the Boswell Sisters—Vet, Martha, and Connee, the lead singer and arranger. They were not the first but were surely the best of the so-called "girl groups"—trios (usually), like the Brox and the Andrews Sisters, working close harmony and style-of-the-minute band backups. In an interview with Christopher Finch, the middle Gumm sister, Virginia, known as Jimmy, singled out the Boswells as particular favorites of the Gumms. But the Boswell ensemble and Connee's solo sides prefigure Garland only approximately, in their view of music as innately vivacious, an exploration of one's positive instincts—as not just a voice rendering a composition but a talent exploding with song. Garland is no fourth Boswell. Their lazy-river velvet, a translation of their native New Orleans inflection into musical terms, sets them apart from Garland's sweetly valiant belting.

We should consider repertory as well, for Garland left her particular mark on the kinds of songs she sang—not only on "her" numbers, the *arie d'obbligo* such as "Swanee" and "Chicago," trotted out at every concert, but on pop music in general. Here Tucker and the Boswells seem even more remote from Garland—Tucker with her egotistical struts, and the Boswells with their black-flavored ballads and rave-ups. Garland's songs of choice, from the start, were mainline American pop, from the Tin Pan Alley masters of Broadway and Hollywood. Listening to Tucker or the Boswells today on records, we can place few of their numbers. We read the names of the composers and lyricists—Endor, Shand, Shuster, Tobias, Doyle, Oppenheim, McCaffrey, Ringle. Who were they? ASCAP's wallflowers. Yes, Tucker starred in shows composed by Cole Porter and Vivian Ellis; the Boswells recorded "Shine On, Harvest Moon." But these were exceptions. While Tucker and the Boswells depended on specialty material, Garland tended toward standards. Specialty ma-

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terial was for specialists; Garland was a universalist. Even "Over the Rainbow," her theme song, was written not for her but for a character in a story.

In this respect, Garland is comparable to Fred Astaire, another influential vocalist in Garland's teen years. Astaire's songs, too, were characters' songs—the Berlin, Gershwin, and Porter songs he sang on stage and screen. Astaire's was a "theatre voice," not a great natural instrument, like Garland's. Still, it was a pliant and personable one, given to singing on the words more than on the melody, and its sound was as witty and deft as the breezy gent Astaire habitually portrayed. He made a few cuts of miscellaneous tunes, including one —"Louisiana"—in the hoary Dixie genre that Sophie Tucker flogged in her youth. It's pleasant, but from Astaire it's implausible. He belongs to the city tempo and the dressy ballad, not to worn-out novelty numbers. Give him "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails" and "Shall We Dance" for stepping, or "Night and Day" and "Let's Face the Music and Dance" for passion. Like Garland, and before her, he helped mark the arrival of an age of swing—not least in his studio cut of the Gershwins' "Slap That Bass," in 1937, set to a driving rhythm that runs from the first bars of alternating washtub and tapping feet, through Astaire's statement-response shout-out with a men's chorus, and straight on to the dashing climax, an arranger's equivalent of what Garland does with her voice alone.

Astaire could not do what she does; his medium was dance. Many a theatre singer learned how to sing from Astaire, but Garland was a singing singer. Did she learn, then, from Bing Crosby, who was even more influential than Astaire in the same era—and, like the Garland-to-be, was a movie personality who sang? There is no doubt that Garland heard a lot of Crosby: all America did. But Crosby, in order to supply the nation's demand, recorded perhaps the most extensive catalogue of the banal and the tawdry in the history of pop music. If the Boswell Sisters and Sophie Tucker specialized and Astaire sang the Masters, Crosby tackled anything put in front of him—the atrociously nostalgic "Little Dutch Mill," the painfully uplifting "What Do I Care, It's Home!," the somehow nondescriptly exotic "Rose of Mandalay."

Garland avoided this trap. By the time she reached her post-Hollywood concert era, she had amassed a treasury of high-tech pop. Nor did she adopt Crosby's style—responsive to rhythm but always improvising on the written notes; laid back, yet vocally coloristic; all tints and shadows. Crosby's Brunswick recording of "Young and Healthy," with Guy Lombardo and his Royal Canadians, doesn't so much deliver as beguile the song, rising to a lengthy scat section in which Bing's "dee-dee-dee" dances around the tune, flirts with the metre, erupts in a whistling break, and, finally retrieving the lyrics, changes them. Garland delivered words and notes precisely; more important, she *attacked* her work with far greater zeal than the humming Bing.

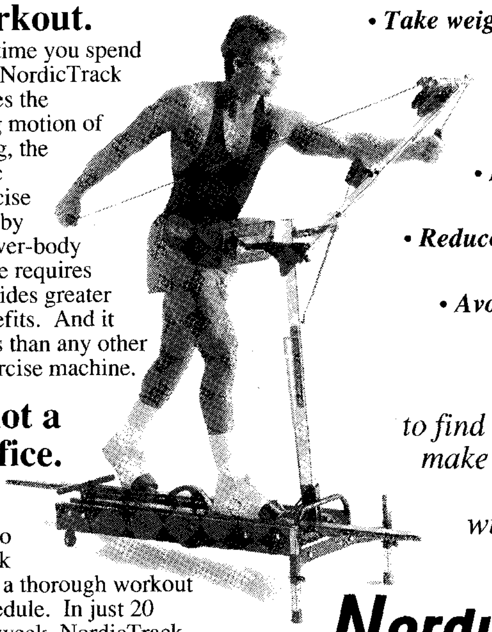
If the young Garland could hear and enjoy the musical traditions she was meant to inherit, she seems to have worked around them to invent herself. Even so, how do we account for the stupendous performance of "Broadway Rhythm" that she presented on the radio on October 26, 1935, just eleven days after her Metro contract was legally ratified? Air checks of the occasion reveal what Garland's stardom was going to mean for a generation to come. Wallace Beery, hosting the "Shell Chateau Hour," brings Garland on for the "opportunity spot." He seems to think she's twelve; she had turned thirteen four months earlier. Inane palaver ensues. Beery asks, "What do you want to do when you grow up to be a *great big girl*, huh?" and Garland replies, "I want to be a singer, Mr. Beery, and I'd like to act, too." But once the talk-show sham is over and the music starts we hear not the usual latest discovery but the singer of the day, the talent that heals and exalts, just as pop music was always telling us talent should. "Infectious" is too mild a word for how good this "Broadway Rhythm" is. The Nacio Herb Brown–Arthur Freed song is about the intoxicating power of American show biz, about how the whole nation participates in the elemental vigor of our music. It concludes, "Everybody sing and dance!"

Garland does better than sing the number; she understands it. Who else at the time did? On film, in "Broadway Melody of 1936," Frances Langford made "Broadway Rhythm" a jazzy school song, and Harry Roy's 78 of the tune, though brilliantly, breathlessly executed, is taut and joyless. In another radio air check, Gertrude Niesen, a sumptuous pop mezzo, beats Garland in sheer instrument and sexiness but lacks the crackle of Garland's innocent wisdom, the way she can sound confidential and comprehensive at once, the way her "Oh! that Broadway rhythm!" sounds like flying, the way her impishly clipped pronunciation of "rhythm" lays personal claim to the key word in the lyric. It's strange that Garland never made a commercial recording of the number; it might well have served her as another theme song.

In 1935, of course, Garland was not perceived as an emblem of show-biz culture; she was perceived as young. It was an era of singing kids: Mitzi Green in the first talkie years, Shirley Temple in the middle and late nineteen-thirties, and Bobby Breen, a sort of male Shirley, during her reign. Garland appeared to be the most recent representative of a tradition. But she was the only kid who sang with the timbre and temperament of an adult. What was really startling was not that she was so young to be singing this well but that *anyone* was singing this well.

Where did her sheer know-how come from? Roger Edens, who was M-G-M's chief vocal coach and arranger when Garland arrived at the studio, was in charge of the youngster's musical development, choosing and adapting her material, and polishing her delivery. The studio directive to sign Garland to a contract was sent out on September 16th, almost six weeks before her début on the "Shell Chateau Hour," so Edens had plenty of time to train her for her "Broadway Rhythm." It seems likely that he also helped train her for her three "Pigskin Parade" numbers. True, M-G-M staffers didn't work for Fox, but then an M-G-M contractee didn't approach a Fox loan-out unprepared. Besides, Edens, who had come West as Ethel Merman's accompanist, was a veteran campaigner in the workings of the then still unusual belting style of delivery.

So perhaps it is Roger Edens who explains Garland's precocious vocal assurance—who taught her the architecture of a song, the weight, the build, the climax, the embellishments. Certainly Garland developed an affinity with good arrangers: ever after, she



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went only with the best (Edens whenever possible), and the results are easy to spot, especially in her concert material. Listen, on her 1961 Carnegie Hall album, to the wryly grimacing lead-in to “San Francisco” (“I never will forget Jeanette MacDonald”), or the way the medley of “Almost Like Being in Love” and “This Can’t Be Love” jauntily splits the difference between the one’s shy aggression and the other’s mock confidence, tumbling the first melody into the second, line upon line, until she slides up to an unexpected top note at the climax.

Garland showed the effects of expert editing from her first days at Metro. In November, 1935, she recorded two songs for Decca which were not released. Then, in June, 1936, she tackled “Stompin’ at the Savoy” and “Swing, Mr. Charlie,” which were, and surely somebody had been patting Garland into shape. On this innocent-looking Decca black-label 78, two innocuous, tuneful melodies take on status as calls to arms in the war to replace Mr. Mendelssohn with Mr. Charlie. Note the allusion to the black world view: swing is part black, and Garland contains multitudes. That smile in the voice—well, one would simply be born with that. But where did she get the wonderful broadening on “band” in

How my heart is singin’
While the *band* is swingin’,

which virtually sites the Savoy for us—ballroom, orchestra, dancing host, and all? Who taught her the metropolitanized rural drawl of her “Mistuh Chahlie”? It sounds seditious. Who showed her the downward glissando on “theme” in

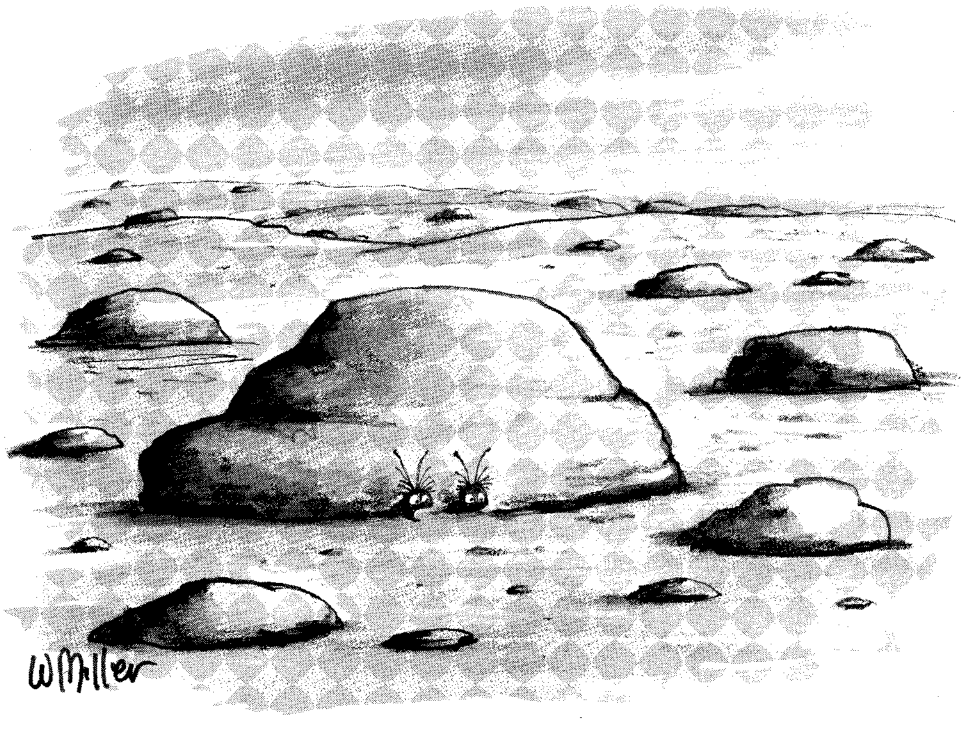
Play a note or two
Of a *theme* that’s new,

which places better than any other singer of the day the delirious quality of a night of hot music?

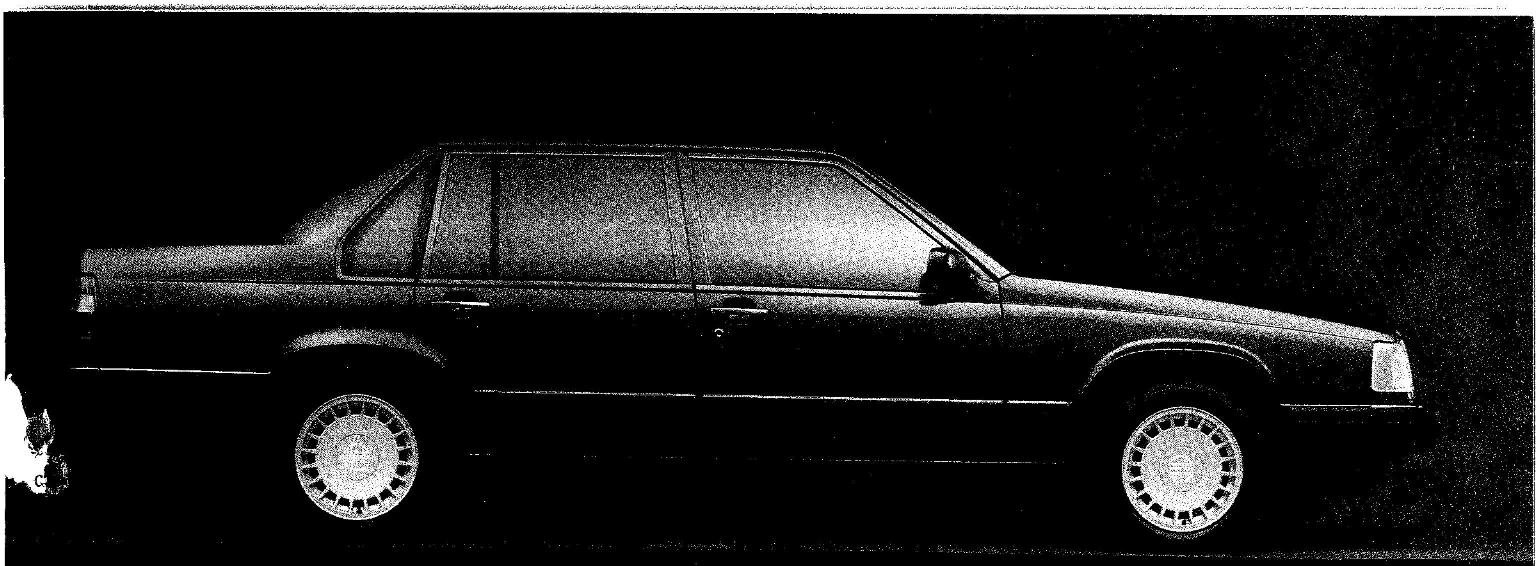
IT wasn’t only Edens who shaped the young Garland. Everyone in power at M-G-M seemed to recognize her as the musician of the moment, and built her roles around her talent. Like “Broadway Rhythm,” many of her songs aren’t just tunes: they are about why people like Garland need to sing and why the rest of us need to hear. Songs about the power of singing were not unique to her. Consider Alice Faye’s “I Feel a Song Comin’ On,” “Music Is Magic,” “Got My Mind on Music,” “Sing Baby Sing,” and “He Ain’t Got Rhythm” (the ultimate condemnation), and Deanna Durbin’s variations on “I Love to Whistle.” Yet it is Garland who makes the most of such material. Faye whispers and Durbin whistles; Garland swells the hall with joy. We notice this particularly when a Garland film doesn’t give her the music to build on, as when “Listen, Darling” allots her three tepid songs—deflating even “Zing! Went the Strings of My Heart,” one of Garland’s most uproarious solos in her Gumm Sisters days—and when the release print of “Life Begins for Andy Hardy” (1941) drops all her numbers. We’re being cheated. Garland is there to sing. (We allow “The Clock,” of 1945, because, as she told Wallace Beery, she’d like to act, too, and “The Clock,” about a soldier and a secretary who fall in love, marry, and part in two days, can’t really use music. It’s about two individuals isolated in their love; it’s too inhibited for song.)

By 1939 and “The Wizard of Oz,” Metro had put Garland over as a major star and personality. Oddly, the studio reversed itself on Garland’s musical identity in “The Wizard.” After all that insistence on swing, suddenly she is singing soft and square: “Over the Rainbow,” and some patter on the death of the Wicked Witch of the East and the charms of the Emerald City. At casting time, she was to have played out another of her sweet-or-hot swingdowns, like the “I like opera”/“I like swing” challenge number she performs with Betty Jaynes in “Babes in Arms.” On the “Wizard” casting sheet, Garland is listed as “An Orphan in Kansas who sings jazz” and Jaynes as “The Princess of Oz, who sings opera.” Jaynes’ character never made it into the shooting script, and “The Jitterbug,” a highly Garlandesque number about an insect whose bite induces an orgy of song and dance—a sort of fairy-ring “Stompin’ at the Savoy”—was filmed but deleted before release. “The Wizard of Oz” is timeless, with no room for the noise of the late nineteen-thirties, yet M-G-M obviously had no idea that the film was to become a classic—the studio had so little inkling of what was classic about it that its all-embracing anthem, “Over the Rainbow,” was very nearly dropped at the last minute; it was thought to be slowing up the action.

“The Wizard of Oz” is not just popular; it is so persuasive a fantasy that it has made its protagonist—the fair-minded and dauntless young Judy—a central figure in our mythology, much as such other classics as “Gone with the Wind,” “Casablanca,” and “It’s a Wonderful Life” have done for Clark Gable, Humphrey Bogart, and James Stewart. In “The Wizard,” Garland’s persona expands from the little sister of “Wanta hear me?” into an adventurer of emblematic moral weight. In the company of the gro-



“Do you suppose there’s life under other rocks?”



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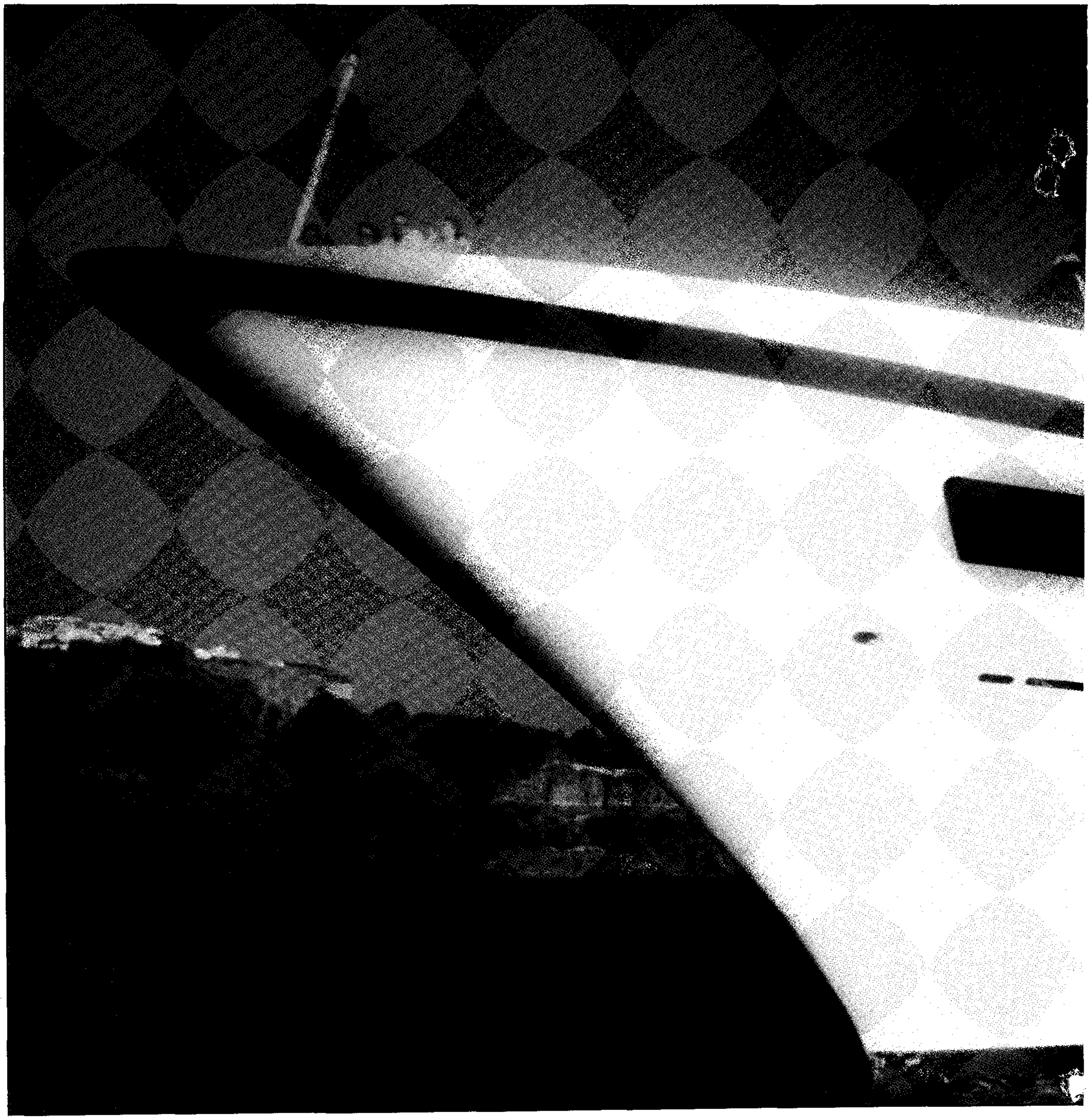

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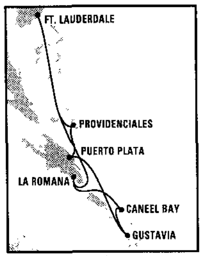
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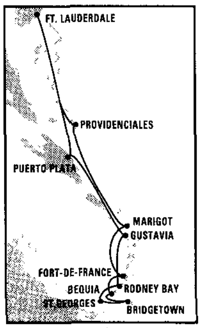
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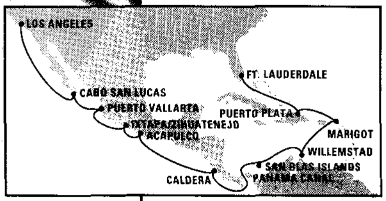
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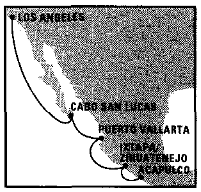
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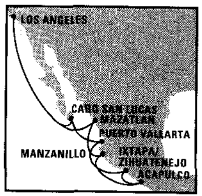
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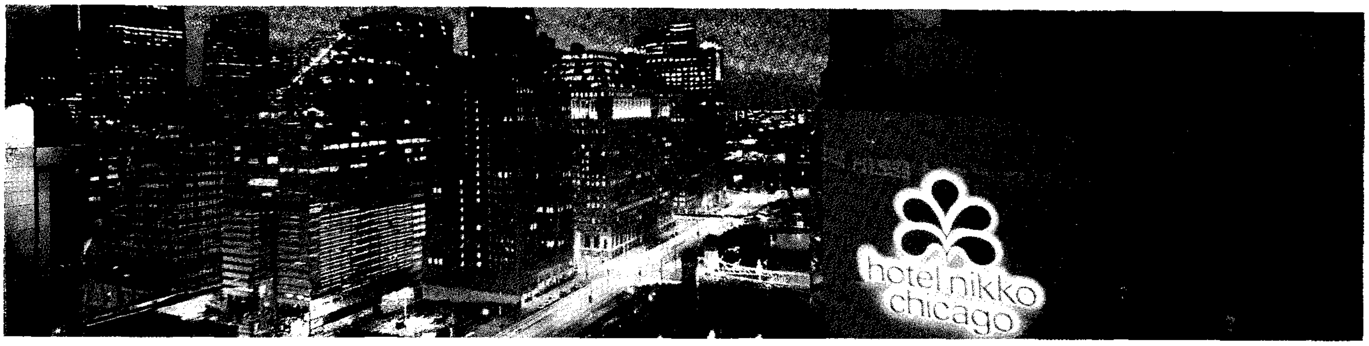

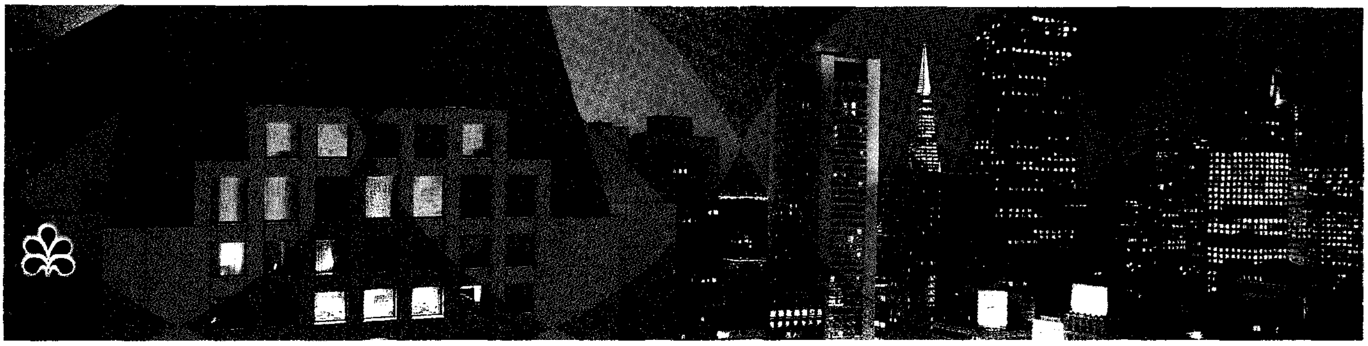

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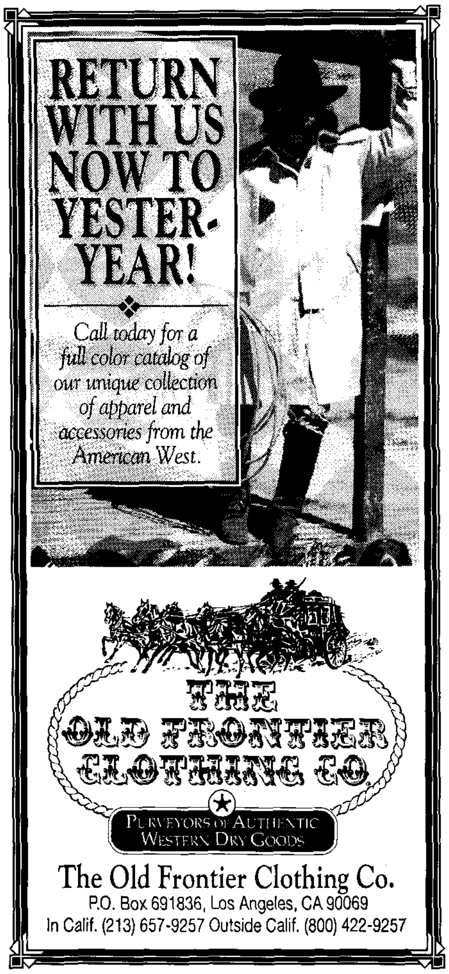
tesques and zanies of Oz—the twee Munchkins and the flying monkeys, the trees that don't merely yield but hurl apples, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, the Cowardly Lion, and the Wicked Witch of the West—Garland's screen presence takes on a burnished innocence. We are used to her as rural, unspoiled, and game, but here these qualities are magnified exponentially: so rural that only flat, drab, impassive Kansas will do for a habitat; so unspoiled that she has literally nothing but a dog; and so game that instead of merely rallying Texas State's football team or bringing spatting pals together she's freeing enslaved peoples from evil tyrants.

True, Garland frees the Munchkins inadvertently, when her house crashes down on one wicked witch, and she similarly finishes off the other by chance while she's putting out the flaming Scarecrow with a bucket of water. Nevertheless, the entire film is built around her quest, and around the ease with which she befriends the good, unmasks the phony, and defeats the vicious. We think of these as standard studio-age Hollywood hero attributes. Don't Gable, Stewart, and Bogart, each in his way, project likable and (in the long run) selflessly stalwart instincts? (Gable is a rogue, Stewart a saint, and Bogart both at once; still, each of them can show a fierce gallantry.) But because Oz is previously unencountered terrain Garland's heroism, in its modest way, startles even Hollywood's notions of making stands. Because M-G-M was the conservative studio, the home of "family values" long before the term became a bigots' euphemism, "The Wizard" purports to teach a disaffected and slightly mutinous girl how to fit in at home, in her community—in the System. Adopting a device used in 1917 in the Mary Pickford film "The Poor Little Rich Girl," the heroine will experience a dream populated by familiar folk in unfamiliar guise, and awaken chastened. She will grow up like her neighbors, observing rites and traditions, and living under the rule of the local plutocratic beldame, Margaret Hamilton.

So Dorothy's journey over the rainbow is meant to teach her that there's no place like home, that she must abandon the mutiny and take her place among the righteous. And yet while she's in Oz she learns anything but subservience. On the contrary, she defies the power structure when she kills the two witches and virtually deposes the humbug Wizard, liberates the underclass in the persons of the Munchkins and the Winkies, and apparently leaves behind her an enlightened oligarchy to be led by her rehabilitated comrades. It is a tribute to Garland's performance that all this dismantling of the structure occurs quite naturally, as if teen-agers routinely went around emancipating fairy kingdoms. Although most of the leading figures of Oz are versions of people Dorothy knows from Kansas, everything in Oz is wildly different from Kansas—except Dorothy (and, of course, her dog). Amid the spectacle, the occult effects, the miscellany of personalities (ranging from the dotty socialite Glinda, say, to the street-corner vaudevillian Lion), and the whirlwind pacing of M-G-M's fairyland, Garland's presence *manages* it all for us, tames it. Look far to the right of the screen during the presentations of the Lullaby League and the Lollipop Guild, in the Munchkin Land sequence, and see Garland's delighted enthusiasm at being the heroine of a place where the natives are three feet high and squeak, or watch her very nearly break up at Bert Lahr's bully spoof seventy seconds or so into his first scene. She isn't uprooted in Oz. She isn't even a tourist. She's just extraordinarily welcome.

What is most exciting about watching the young Garland come into her stardom is that the vehicle of arrival is no "Flying Down to Rio," "Our Dancing Daughters," "Bill of Divorcement," or "Public Enemy" (among Hollywood's other initiating titles) but, rather, a genuine masterpiece, even a work of genius (or geniuses, given the synergic nature of studio-age filmmaking). There is one miscalculation in the final moments in Oz, however, when Glinda reveals that Dorothy always had the power to return home, by knocking the magical ruby slippers together. Well, why didn't Glinda say so in the first place? Because then there would have been no movie.

Or is it as neat as that? Glinda is in one respect the key figure that Dorothy encounters in Oz, because Glinda is the only principal not anticipated in Kansas—that is, she is the one that Dorothy invents. Not surprisingly, this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near-orphan has invented a mother, a little scatterbrained but attentive and influential in ways that Aunt Em and Uncle Henry are not. Glinda neutralizes the Witch's soporific poppy field, but Em and Henry cannot protect Toto from Miss Gulch. And Dorothy's aunt and uncle are the only Kansas people not reanimated in Oz—in other words, not needed on the voyage. What Dorothy does need is to understand the value of having a family, even if it's not one of Tolstoy's happy ones. The ruby slippers are the ultimate M-G-M symbol—not magic but the glass of truth. They tell us that we're not going to get everything we want in life, and that we'll have to pay some price for whatever we do get. Accepting one's place in an imperfect world is difficult; that is why Garland begins the Oz adventure by running away from home with her threatened dog. And that is why her return has a slight touch of tragedy about it. Consider the irony: at home, she cannot get what she wants; in Oz, she can get what she wants, but what she wants is to get home.

In the end, "The Wizard of Oz" is yet another classic American fable about growing up, about exchanging the child's charmed existence for the responsibilities of the adult. What an all-encompassing role for Garland to play on her emergence as a movie star! This, clearly, is what launched her as a permanent citizen of American culture, and what supported her through the films of variable quality she starred in for Metro in the nineteen-forties; through the constant use made of her as a feeder for Mickey Rooney in the dreary "Andy Hardy" and frantically platitudinous "Babes" series; and through the cameos in lifeless bios and degenerate revues. The "Babes" films—"Babes in Arms" (1939), "Strike Up the Band" (1940), "Babes on Broadway" (1941), and "Girl Crazy" (1943)—reclaim Garland's pre-"Wizard" identity as the amateur barnstormer, crying for love and doing her swing. She enters—really, sneaks into—"Strike Up the Band" mouthing scat lines to match Rooney's drumming; and she is used to match Rooney (or to play second fiddle to his Toscanini) far too often after her championship performance in Oz. All the "Babes" stories are Rooney's stories: "Babes in Arms" his crusade to produce an all-teen revue; "Strike Up the Band" his fight to win a band contest, incidentally paying for an operation for a stricken comrade; "Babes on Broadway" his dream of crashing the big time. Even in "Girl Crazy," in which the Babes mount a rodeo to save Cody College, the one who puts on the show is Rooney, though the dean of the college is *Garland's* grandfather, and though, for those first few reels out West, Rooney, as a Park Avenue playboy, is out of his element while the cowgirl Garland is the mistress of ceremonies.

Rooney was the head Babe because he was then enjoying a wild box-office popularity. He is exhausting. His dancing is the Charge of the Light Brigade; his imitations (of Lionel Barrymore, F.D.R., Richard Mansfield's Cyrano, Harry Lauder, Joe Louis, even Carmen Miranda) explode the Richter scale. Yes, it's talent. It's versatility. But it's egregious. The "Hoedown" number in "Babes on Broadway" gives us the Garland and Rooney styles frozen in their moment: he overbearingly rustic, a real turkey in the straw; she having fun with it, going rural without trying to end the world.

The "Babes" series is notorious for its soda-shop world view—something that somehow came along with Rooney. (Garland's pictures without him are more sophisticated.) Lack of realism is the curse of these films; they're so calculated in their homilies. "Teach [a kid] to blow a horn, and he'll never blow a safe," Paul Whiteman declares in "Strike Up the Band." Anyway, Rooney won't. He keeps telling his mother, Ann Shoemaker, "I'm gonna make you a queen." She doesn't deserve it. Though she has been M-G-M-ized down from the raptly frustrated nag she played for R.K.O., as Katharine Hepburn's mother in "Alice Adams," five years earlier, she is still willing to try some emotional blackmail to force Rooney to become not a bandleader but a doctor. Oh, she gives way in due course, because music is a healing art: bandleaders may be borderline on the status charts, but the exhilaration they inspire is beneficial and they promote national unity in troubled times. "Look at George Gershwin!" Rooney exults. "Why, his music's as good as Beethoven or Bach. Better, maybe. Best of all, it's American!"

These tales are too parochial for Garland, yet she's the great thing in them today, when their take-no-prisoners purity has staled and the notion of frantically Broadway-bound kids has become both moth-eaten and incredible. Garland makes these films bearable because the good sense she gives off bevels the purity and because we know that she, at least, *would* have been a smash on Broadway. She's the best of the Babes—not only of the series and of M-G-M but of all Hollywood. It's that presence again, that casual audacity in song and that sincerity in character, compelling us to believe that putting on the show or striking up the band is as important as purging Oz of tyrannical powers and getting back over the rainbow. Garland's journey in these M-G-M years is a basic human journey, to win self-esteem through work and love. When, at the climax of "Girl Crazy" (and the series as a whole), Garland sings "I Got Rhythm," the persona that she has established "reads" the song for us as a kind of graduation hymn to the talent that succeeds and the personality that delights. "I want to be a singer, Mr. Beery, and I'd like to act, too." She's getting what she wants, including the unstated wish implicit in all show-biz dreams: to be liked. It was always clear that Garland had rhythm. What is now becoming clear is that she also has endless charm.

THE films themselves often fail her. Few of Garland's forties musicals, for all the gloss and grandeur we note after her late-thirties B films, are irreproachable. "For Me and My Gal" (1942) has vigor and passion—the guts, very nearly, of Warner Brothers—and it intercuts its obsession about "playing the Palace" with the First World War, a dire narrative turn to wish upon a nostalgic backstager. Garland's vis-à-vis, Gene Kelly, is allowed to echo the cad he originated on Broadway in "Pal Joey," and this role gives the story a tension that no "Babes" scenario had. Garland has something to play against, for once; even a line as corny as "You'll never make the big time because you're small time in your heart!" goes over quite forcefully, because Garland is really outraged at Kelly's selfishness.

But an item as apparently enticing as "Easter Parade" (1948), which gives us Garland and Fred Astaire in a cascade of Irving Berlin songs (including "A Couple of Swells," classic not only because the staging puts the elegant Astaire into hobo rags but because Garland so obviously relishes slumming), turns out to be sluggish between the numbers. The story line (about how Astaire loses his professional dancing partner, Ann Miller, and replaces her with Garland, and how Garland keeps feeling unappreciated) is hit-and-run nonsense: Miller is so depressed at having to play the villain that even Charles Ludlam couldn't have spoofed her performance; and there is a bit involving a waiter (Jules Munshin) describing his Caesar salad which is one of the most intolerable three minutes in cinema.

Worst of all, these M-G-Ms have no sexuality. They do have love plots, generally with a boy next door. Garland even gets married a few times—unfortunately, to men like George Murphy, Robert Walker, and Van Johnson. Over at Fox, Darryl Zanuck held that as long as Alice Faye, Betty Grable, and Vivian Blaine could handle the song and dance, the leading man in a musical didn't have to be

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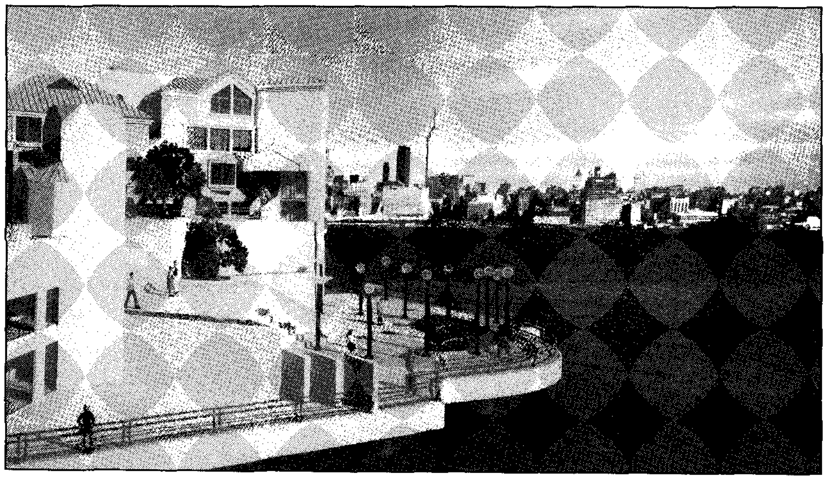

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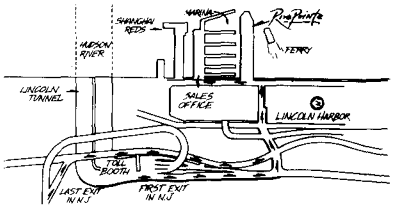

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musical. Actors such as John Payne, George Montgomery, and Dennis O'Keefe gave the Fox ladies something potent to contend with. M-G-M locked Garland into Mickey Rooney here and Gene Kelly there. And when the studio finally roped in a non-singing hero, for "The Harvey Girls," who was it? John Hodiak.

There's the swing thing, too—not only the insistent use of it but its evolution into a kind of fanfare, the sound of the hero, so that in "Presenting Lily Mars" (1943) we know that Marta Eggerth is the villain simply because she sings operetta. Granted, Eggerth is the "Blossom Time" sort of diva who looks fine and sings well yet somehow makes you hate her anyway. But how heroic is music that has to erase all other music to thrive? After Eggerth hears Garland spoofing her style in a night club, she walks out of her starring role, leaving the way clear for Garland. Is that fair? Garland is supposed to hit it big not because swing is the thing but because *all* Garland's music and her winning presence are bound to top the competition. Indeed, Eggerth is given back her part, and Garland returns to her maid's role, like a trouper. She has learned her lesson, earned her Broadway, and Van Heflin, as the producer, duly gives her her stardom in the film's finale—which, appropriately, is "Broadway Rhythm."

Actually, Garland's swing effect had begun to give way by about 1943, mainly because swing itself had. (Ironically, operetta was the corpse that refused to die, as M-G-M followed Jeanette MacDonald in the mid-forties with Kathryn Grayson and Jane Powell.) Perhaps Garland's last official act as an interpreter of the theme that's new is her guest appearance in "Thousands Cheer" (1943) to sing "The Joint Is Really Jumping Down at Carnegie Hall," accompanied by José Iturbi, who gives a demonstration of crossover with a boogie-woogie accompaniment:

> They're playing deet-deety-a-ta,
> Deet-deety-a-ta,
> With Shostakovich,
> Deet-deety-a-ta,
> Deet-deety-a-ta,
> Mozart and Bach;
> Deet-deety-a-ta,
> Deet-deety-a-ta,
> And they don't know which;
> 'Cause anything can happen when
> they start to rock!

We know that this marks an artistic climax because Garland's commercial recordings are turning mellow, pulling back from swing's whipcrack rhythm and scat riffs. Her "Blues in the Night," a classic of wailing jazz, comes off almost as a lullaby, and she sweetens that Second World War woman's blues "No Love, No Nothin' " to emphasize not the loneliness but the hoped-for reunion. She is not, however, misreading these songs' emotional content; Sweetening is a facet of the Garland style; she so enjoys singing that she can't convey sorrow. Listen to her "Over the Rainbow" again. It's not a dirge. It's a wish that comes true.

Garland's sound is always contemporary. When she was a teen-ager, her music was an uproar, incendiary. One didn't just play or dance to music; one struck up the band and stomped at the Savoy. During the Second World War, American pop turned soft, harmonious, obliging. The closest she gets to the invigoration of her thirties numbers is the lifelessly hectic "On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe," from "The Harvey Girls." (Interestingly, she never made it one of her standards in her concert years.)

Garland's career epitomizes mid-twentieth-century American song in her break with the vaudevillian past and her champion demonstrations of state-of-the-art vocalism. That is why she is more important as a singer than as a movie star, and why she is such a telling historical figure. She defines the past so neatly that we have to keep her around to know what American life used to sound like. Other singers recall Garland's times, of course, but usually with personal mannerisms that, however pleasing, contaminate the report. In the nineteen-forties, we think of Frank Sinatra, so intrinsic to the period that he was known simply as the Voice. But Sinatra didn't have Garland's range of repertory or her power at that time. We remember his inappropriate attempt upon "Ol' Man River" in Metro's Jerome Kern bio, "Till the Clouds Roll By," and his lesser-known two-sided Columbia twelve-inch 78 of the complete "Soliloquy" from "Carousel," well intentioned but direly unpropelled.

Ella Fitzgerald deserves mention in this quarter—and here we have one of the best-endowed instruments ever heard. But where Garland spent her prime sifting the catalogue for standards, Fitzgerald vies with Bing Cros-

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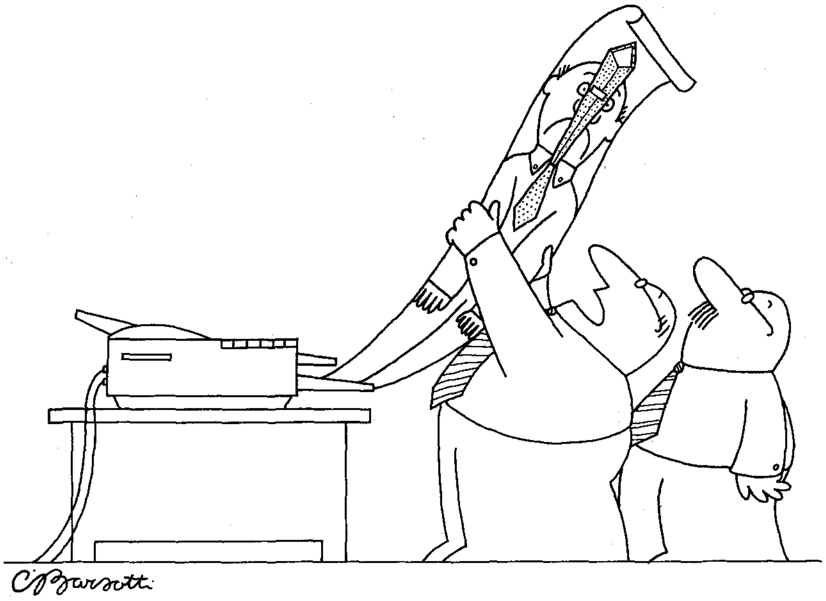

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by in the dissemination of nonsense. Not till the nineteen-fifties, when Fitzgerald began reviewing Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Berlin, and the Gershwins on her classic Verve albums, did she rival Garland's eminence of taste—and even then Fitzgerald's approach is smooth for these edgy Broadway jokers. Her "Slap That Bass" is typical, in a masterly Nelson Riddle arrangement. Plucked bass and high-hat cymbals lead her in on the verse—very jazzy. But Ella is serene. She *pets* that bass. Fitzgerald doesn't know what Gershwin, Astaire, and Garland knew—that swing is a matter of impact. And when swing is over, one doesn't revive it; one travels on. This is Garland's strong point—an ability to move from the old style to the next style, to reflect the age in the very noise she raises.

What did not move in any way during Garland's M-G-M years was her image: loyal, forgiving, moral, sensitive. And wholesome. Compare Garland's idea of a showgirl's needs in "Ziegfeld Girl" with that of Lana Turner. Turner wants to live the life, at any cost, so, of course, she must die the death—luckily, after falling down a fabulous Cedric Gibbons staircase—whereas Garland merely wants to see her crestfallen father back onstage playing to a receptive public. Along with wholesome comes small-town. Garland ideally hails from nowhere, or from some M-G-M fantasy of the kind of place that would enjoy having Mickey Rooney for a native son. In "Strike Up the Band," Garland and the other Babes live in a town called Riverwood. What are they supposed to be, leprechauns?

A small city will do as well—which brings us to the other masterpiece of Garland's M-G-M era, "Meet Me in St. Louis." M-G-M, like all Hollywood studios, feared and loathed New York (as America's city of power) as much as it kowtowed to it (as America's most intense location), and here New York is seen as the antithesis of all that is salubrious. St. Louis represents continuity and self-realization; New York represents upheaval. That is all the plot the film has: will the Smith family maintain its roots in St. Louis or go off to confront unknown values in the loveless metropolis? But then this is not a story movie; it's an atmosphere movie. The seasons of a year slip by (a summer going-off-to-college party, Halloween, Christmas festivities, and the rejuvenation of spring rites at the World's Fair), but so, in synecdoche, do the ages of a lifetime (childhood, adolescence, young prime, married authority, and Grandpa's quaint dotage). The film lacks a center, other than the emotional gravity of the Smiths in stasis, commotion, and stasis again. There is no protagonist.

But there is a referee: Garland. She undergoes no painful transition into womanhood, as in "The Wizard," and does not yearn to put on a show in a barn, although she does some parlor entertaining, with little Margaret O'Brien, in "Under the Bamboo Tree." At most, Garland describes a crush on Tom Drake, flirts with Tom Drake, and, at length, dates Tom Drake. And here Garland has a fleshed-out family—not just a Kansan aunt and uncle supplemented by a fantasy surrogate mother. Mary Astor as a St. Louis mother is beneficent, and far more in control of her world than she was in "Listen, Darling"; Leon Ames is a strict but doting father; Grandpa is ameliorative; and there are three sisters and a Junior. Life is painless. And Garland is the major reason. She is, at times subtly, everywhere in the film, ministering, buttressing, admonishing. She is absent from only one episode—Margaret O'Brien's lurid Halloween initiation in defying the neighborhood sourpuss—and even there she comes in at the end, as avenging angel against Tom Drake, who in the excitement is mistakenly thought to have bullied O'Brien.

"Meet Me in St. Louis" directly matches—and counters—"The Wizard of Oz," in that Garland is now not only a daughter but a parent. She does a great deal more caring for the Smith children (except the third daughter, Joan Carroll, an actor without a part) than Mr. and Mrs. Smith do, and is it not Garland, rather than Father Ames, who decides not to move to New York, not to leave "Kansas"? Yes, Ames officially makes the resolution. But Garland, in the singing of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," which leads to O'Brien's fit of despair among the snowmen—as temporary in their seasonal symbolism as life in St. Louis is meant to be permanent—frames it for him. Just as Garland leads the expedition through Oz, Garland directs life among the Smiths of St. Louis.

The rest of Garland's M-G-Ms are not as good as "Meet Me in St. Louis," however—and, like it, they dim the heroic profile she outlined in Oz. Her presence, at least, remains keen; and she retains her sense of humor. Her ironic self-deprecating throwaways are as special as such other Hollywood patents as Eve Arden's deadpan sex-war lamentations and William Powell's ruthlessly soigné putdowns. The dumbest lines give Garland scope. In "Strike Up the Band," Rooney devastates her romantic hopes, yet reminds

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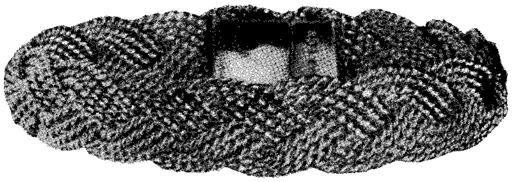

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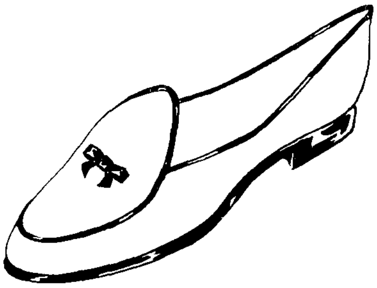

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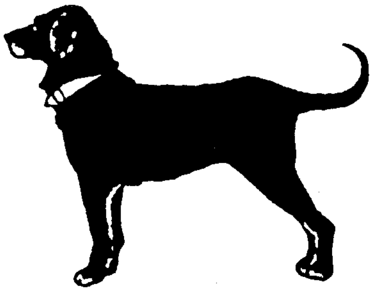

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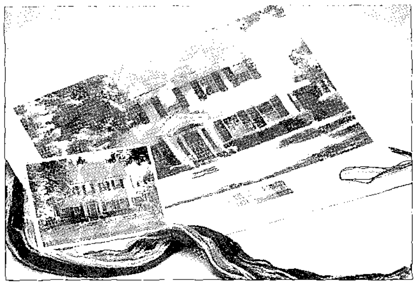

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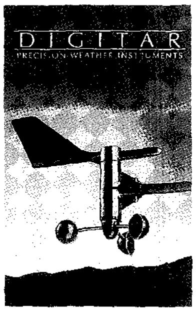

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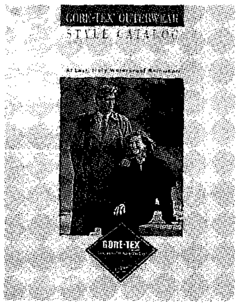

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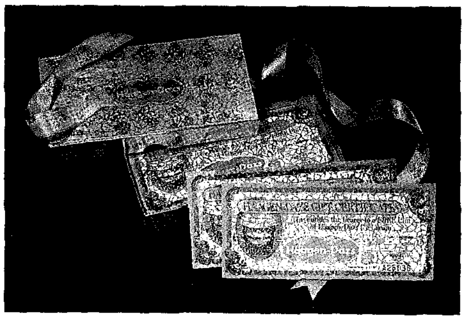

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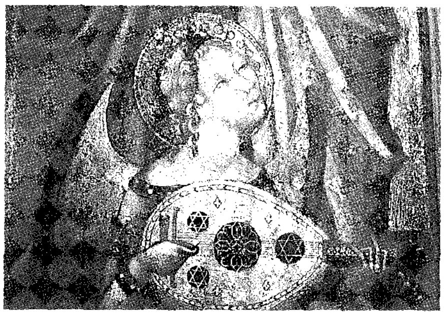

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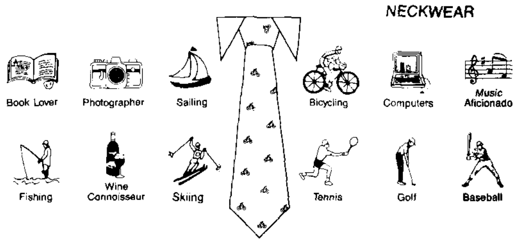

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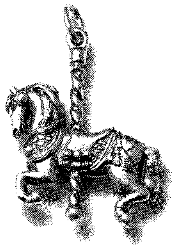

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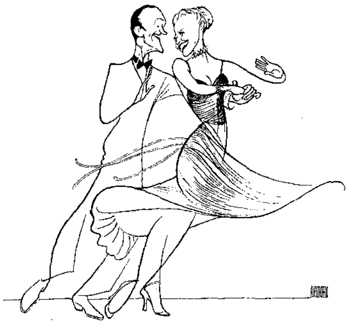

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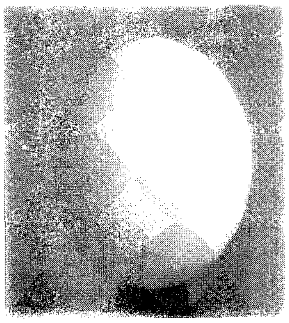

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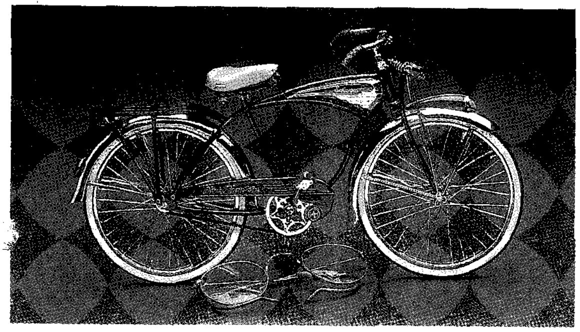

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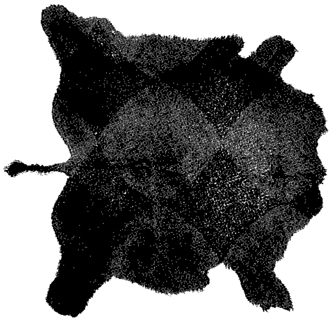

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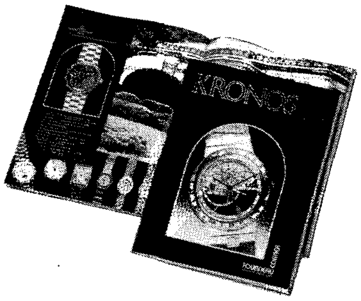

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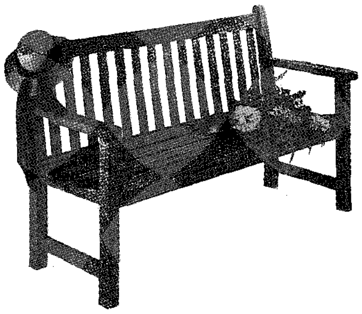

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her that she is "as important to me as a brass section." "That's pretty important," Garland replies, catching in three words the girl's hurt, her refusal to be defeated, and her unwilling knowledge that she probably deserves someone better, even Tom Drake. And she can be ingenious. In "Easter Parade," challenged to demonstrate sex appeal on the street, she gets men to look at her by throwing a "gookie"—Harpo Marx's blowfish face.

Whether one thinks of Garland as a victim of M-G-M's wall-sampler typecasting or as the actress who by her immediately intelligible charm outwitted it, she is still known primarily as a "performer"—singing, dancing, being loved by the public, and aching to play the Palace, where the public and the love are copious. Though her great Metro titles, "The Wizard of Oz" and "Meet Me in St. Louis," give her few performing spots, a Garland film is essentially a backstager.

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Maybe that is why "The Harvey Girls" is a big, funless dud: so much effort, and all Garland gives us is blue-plate specials. If Garland's gift is to reintroduce us to the very purpose of our popular music, to teach us what exhilaration lies under our noses, then, surely, the recognition of that gift should involve her hitting it big in show biz. We don't need to watch Judy figuring out who had the medium-rare and who had the well-done; we want her to sing her inspiriting songs (of which "The Harvey Girls" is strangely barren) and take us to Broadway.

"There's a Lily Mars in every town and they're all alike!" Van Heflin rails. "So full of hope and so hopeless!" In most towns, maybe. But it was M-G-M's perception that in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, there was a Frances Gumm, full of hope and a sure thing. By proxy, she takes us all to stardom, showing us the self-esteem you develop from performing as well as Judy Garland performs. And we have to notice that not one of the other big Hollywood backstager stars did this. Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell, Joan Blondell, and the rest of the Warners crew were Depression thespians: eats and the rent and (this is implied) a stake in holding the System together is their reimbursement. Fox's Faye and Grable need John Payne more than they need applause. Fred Astaire needs Ginger Rogers to perfect his sense of style. But Garland can show us how radiant it makes you not simply to *be* talented but to be *recognized* as such. She can do this even in the one film, of all her forties M-G-Ms, that falls outside the M-G-M style—"The Pirate" (1948).

This isn't M-G-M's Garland; this is Vincente Minnelli's. He wants to discover something the "Babes" and "Andy Hardy" pictures missed: something luscious. Garland had married Minnelli in 1945, as if in celebration of the more mature and romantic young woman Minnelli had just made of her in "The Clock," a transformational film designed to distance the new Garland from the old, not only in its lack of song and dance but in its intimacy. Before "The Clock," Garland's films were crowded with people and events; in "The Clock," the establishing shots of Manhattan's towers deliberately dwarf the city's human element to frame the privacy of the tale. This is not the New York that Metro would invent for "On the Town," freakish and friendly, a kind of big steel Riverwood. Minnelli's New York is the real place: cute little kids kick you in the leg, officials are uncoöperative, passing strangers inveigh and fume. All this only highlights the sweetness of Garland's romance with Robert Walker, a soldier with forty-eight hours to kill before departing for duty. The three sailors in "On the Town" have no trouble picking up their dates, but Walker can't seem to connect with anyone—except Garland. It's as if the city had nothing in it, nothing at all, but crowds and Miss Right. Heck, she's Miss Perfect. She always was, but now Minnelli has stripped away not only the "Wanta hear me?" but the Babe's cute mannerisms, the way her good intentions could be read in her movements. The Garland of "The Clock" is more methodical, reflective, as if she were in the process of discovering herself.

The next Minnelli-Garland feature, "The Pirate," is a musical, bringing the new Garland into her old habitat to test the invention. Minnelli, though, who was a designer as well as a director, takes us far from Riverwood, and not just to the Caribbean but to a facetious version of it. "The Pirate" is so exotic that it isn't merely a costume picture but the Wardrobe from Hell,

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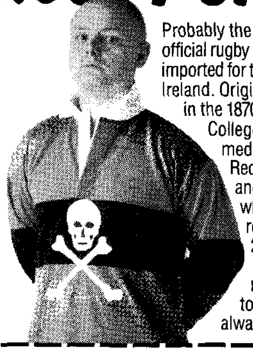

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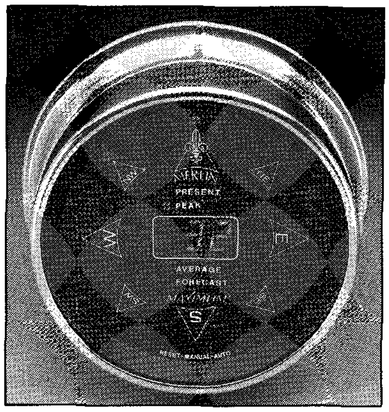

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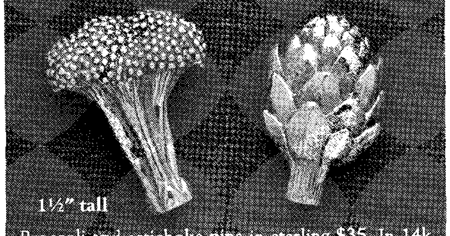

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"The Pirate" was a failure on its original release, and today it is another of those cult musicals, a festival for the initiated. Yet its only problem is a third-rate score (by Cole Porter, just before his return to form later that year, in New York, with "Kiss Me, Kate"). It is a messy, funny, deranged, and sexy film—Garland's co-star Gene Kelly looks uncharacteristically steamy in his tight pants and biceps rings. It is thematically sophisticated as well, apparently a musical comedy about a moony young woman caught between a dashing vagabond (Kelly) pretending to be a pirate and a rich old bore (Walter Slezak) who really is one. In fact, the film explores the clash of pretense and reality in virtually every scene, and draws the conclusion that the scoundrels of the world cannot escape reality, while the gifted cannot escape their dreams.

Without Garland the film might well have been one of the Freed Unit's serious misfires, like "Yolanda and the Thief," a promising fantasy with Fred Astaire, a nice score, some eye-filling dance sequences choreographed by Eugene Loring—and the intensely uncharismatic Lucille Bremer. Garland roots "The Pirate" in Kansas, levelling out the bizarrerie. Minnelli has his idea of Garland; we have ours. Maybe she shouldn't be so Middle American in such a Caribbean fandango of a show, but without her sense of proportion (and the information she gave us in her earlier films, especially "The Wizard of Oz") "The Pirate" would have ended up a cult musical without a cult.

GARLAND had finished yet another backstager, "Summer Stock," when M-G-M cancelled her contract, in 1950. She was one of the studio's biggest draws, but she had become grossly undependable: late, tired—in fact, unwilling. She had logged one M-G-M short, one Fox college musical, and four guest appearances and twenty-three lead roles in M-G-M features, all within fifteen years. With Garland hitched to one of its most amenable directors (actually, by then the marriage to Minnelli was over in all but the paperwork), the studio had expected to keep her as Babe-for-life. But Garland's biography isn't movie. The studio was indignantly sorry and Garland was exhausted, and as they parted company a number of her standards could have come to mind: "By Myself," "You Made Me Love You," and "What Now My Love." Garland's biography is songs.

At this point, her life itself became something of a backstager, a story not only made of performing but about performing. She took to the concert stage, successfully, in the first of several comebacks: Garland in person was something most people didn't think they'd ever see. But the backstager of her personal life would be made public —breakdowns, drug addiction, suicide attempts—as if she were living out a Susan Hayward movie.

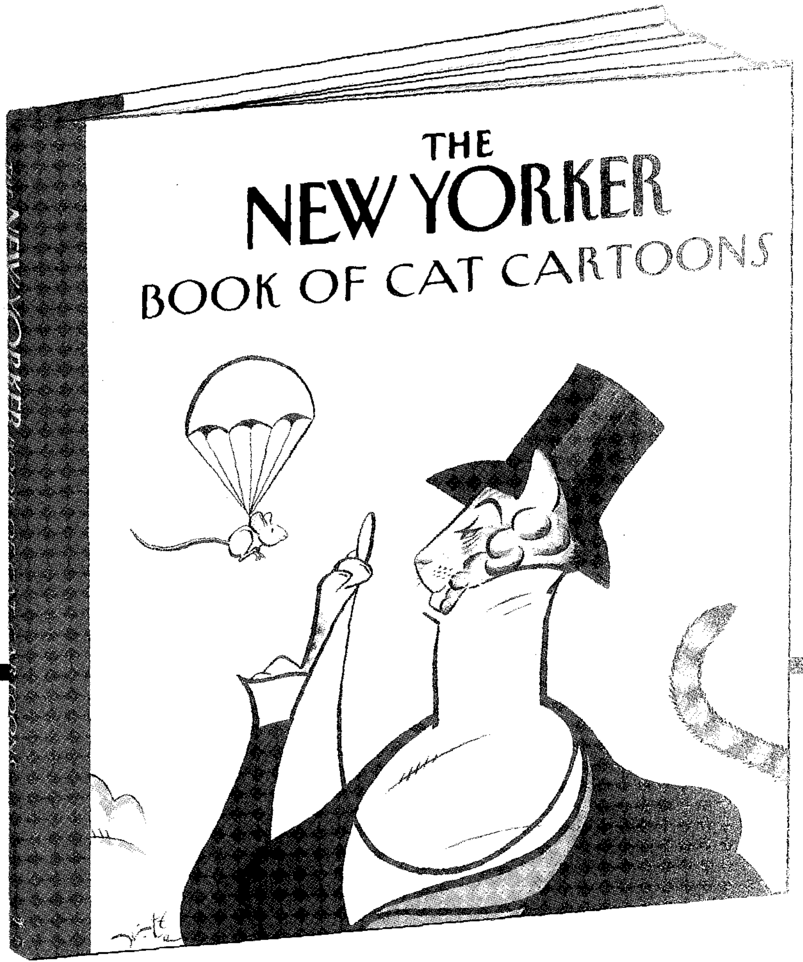
This doom, this loss of innocence, is a favorite metaphor in American art—"Huckleberry Finn," "The Great Gatsby," "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," "Gone with the Wind," "Citizen Kane," "Follies." The Jeffersonian paradise turns into a plutocrats' industrial satrapy, and Rosebud becomes a totem word signifying "Power isn't happiness." Americans like this reading of the lives of their rich and famous—especially their movie stars, because a movie actor's fame is so personal. The star commands the absolute immediacy of presence which industrialists and writers, and even politicians, don't. Garland's presence was so appealingly youthful and energetic that to see the portrait crack—to learn that the Babes and their Broadway weren't what they seemed—is to have to give up a basic all-American belief in what stardom consists of.

Certainly Garland had to give it up. Her movies had been lies—not her performances but her scripts. Or no: she had to make one last film. She would, in the event, make several, but she needed one in particular—a *climactic* backstager, to put all her information in one receptacle, confront the Babe with the woman, the singer with the actress, the innocence with the bitter wisdom, the heedless delight of stardom with the despair no stardom can assuage—the lies with the truth.

This movie was "A Star Is Born" (1954), which was made for Warner Brothers and is the ultimate Garland picture in its completeness of personal statement. We get the characteristic kid-from-nowhere breaking through to glory, but at a price. Glory isn't fail-safe—and, unlike Oz, it's not a place one comes home from. And the songs, though they were tailored for Garland (by Harold Arlen and Ira Gershwin), are more about the character than about the character's talent. This is no "Everybody Sing." "Lose That Long Face," an atrocious urchin number, stands in the Garland tradition, and "Born in a Trunk" is pure Metro specialty material, incorporating some rather Minnelli-esque visuals. But "The Man That Got Away" and "It's a New World" sound different from the tunes Garland sang for L. B. Mayer—less golden and content. More adult. Best of all, in the Rooney-Kelly role we get James Mason, in what is arguably his greatest performance—barely leashing a violence that tells us what horror the glory can be when it is taken away.

Ironically, after all the scandals Garland is utterly secure here, capping a rallentando in the "Here's What I'm Here For" recording-studio scene with a firm—not an angry, just a *very professional*—downbeat of her hand to keep the song's structure in trim. She's in charge. And at the fadeout, as the camera slowly pulls back from the star accepting the crowd's homage—surely a basic Judy shot—the orchestra very subtly quotes a touch of "Over the Rainbow." There! That *is* our Dorothy up on the screen, just as it always has been. But remember, Garland isn't Dorothy. Dorothy is Garland. Or, rather, it was never our Judy in those Metro stories. Judy was telling the stories—telling them about someone else, whose music more or less corresponded to hers. Now that she has completed that part of her career, she is freed—a star is *re*born—to concertize: to retire the character that never was and simply to make the music.

So the purest American backstage personality is, from now on, onstage. Oddly, her private life increasingly



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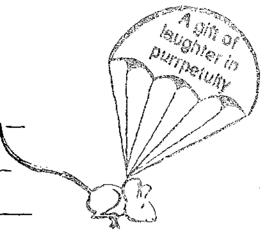
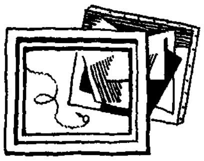

A gift of laughter in purpetuity

supplies public announcements, bad news: that show-biz glory does not in itself supply any valid affirmation. There are cancellations, sudden terrors of the audience, falls onstage, lyric flubs. First, she made it look easy—a flawless "Broadway Rhythm" at thirteen. Then she made it look hard. For a generation, Garland fitted into the musical's rigid belief that show-biz glory is self-realization. For the next generation, Garland appears to prove that this glory is dissolution, a loss of nerve. After all, stardom in America is based not on one's gifts but on one's image. She is losing control while she takes control, one ship passing itself in the night. In the novel "Myron" Gore Vidal has his time-travelling protagonist encountering Garland on the M-G-M lot in 1948 and warning her, "If you don't [get off the pills] you'll be dead in twenty-one years." And Judy temporizes. "That's a hell of a long time off and besides . . . "



Pills weren't her fun, any more than stardom was her salvation. It appears that the people who at various times took charge of Garland's career and, inseparably, her life fed her habit and enforced her stardom, often with gigs that she heard about only at the last minute, or that were so poorly thrown together that any reasonable person would have cancelled. Garland invented a new kind of survival, based entirely on disaster.

Yet somewhere in all this is a singer with an international public that ranges from the casually clued-in to the impassioned devotee. From New York's Palace and Met and Carnegie Hall to London's Palladium and Paris's Olympia, Garland's public sought her out as a singer. Listen to the concert recordings: how the fans clap at the launching of one of her standards, even at certain familiar climaxes, yet attend silently to some novelty. They don't intrude; they support. And she surprises them, constantly swelling her act with the day's news from Broadway and the West End, like "Make Someone Happy," "Hey, Look Me Over," "The Music That Makes Me Dance"—a practice curtailed in her last years only because she could no longer retain new lyrics. Garland had always been keyed into the energy of pop. As "Ziegfeld Girl" showed us, she began by finishing off a tradition. She ended so, too, for, by the close of her life, Tin Pan Alley had ceded the field to rock, the first new sound in her lifetime that she didn't accommodate.

Garland's weekly television show, in 1963-64, was, in effect, a last hurrah, her final extended union with a moviegoing-sized public. It was not a success, partly because it ran opposite the unbeatable "Bonanza" and partly because problems in coming up with a format at first saddled Garland with extraneous helpers and some ghastly guests.

A few of the guests were, if nothing else, appropriate. The appearance of Mickey Rooney, on the first show to be taped, could be regarded as a most penetrating nostalgia, certified by movie history, yet unnerving—not least because he, too, suffered personal and professional difficulties in mid-career. Most arresting was Garland's introduction of "one of my newest and nicest friends"—Barbra Streisand, in her early, mannerist phase, of straight hair and bangs, nautical couture, and highly inflected vocal technique, fresh from "I Can Get It for You Wholesale" and her first two albums, with "Funny Girl" and top stardom just ahead of her. The theme that's new meets the theme that's newer. The two dally over some banter, joking that their great talent makes them hate each other. "Don't stop hating me," Barbra says. "I need the confidence." No, she doesn't; never has a newcomer seemed so comfortable amid greatness. Even when Ethel Merman roars up out of the audience to complete this trio of Great Belters of Our Time, Streisand is utterly at ease, secure in her solos and matching Garland in their duets—especially a breezy mating of Judy's "Get Happy" with Barbra's "Happy Days Are Here Again," a kind of duelling of theme songs. One thing: Garland scarcely takes her eyes off Streisand, while Streisand seldom glances back, concentrating on the camera. She doesn't need the personal interaction—with anyone, colleagues or public—that Garland lives on. We can see why Streisand was content to trade live entertainment for movie work, and why Garland left the movies for life.

Garland's Christmas special in 1963 typifies what worked and what didn't for the series as a whole. The Eisenhower-through-Vietnam-era televi-

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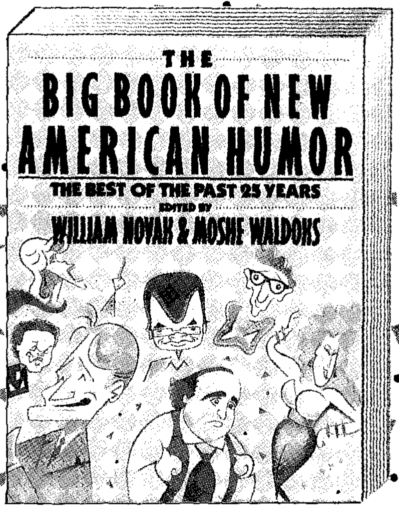
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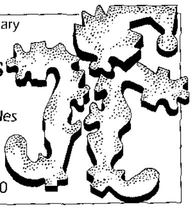

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sion Christmas show was almost as codified a genre as the thirties college musical, with its prudent mixture of seasonal ditties and easy-listening pop, its living room with festive tree, its "drop-in" guest stars and interlude with carollers. "Gemütlich" is the word for this form—the kind of thing you'd expect Perry Como to be doing. But Garland? We are taken to an implausible set—a suburban split-level home—where Liza Minnelli and Lorna and Joey Luft (the latter in a minute Beatles suit) assist Mom. Everybody sing. Except that Joey's "Where Is Love?" (the "Tomorrow" of the nineteen-sixties) is tentative, and Garland's report to us that Liza is "out skating with her beau" but will be along presently strikes a curiously pedestrian note for such a tumultuous family. Where most Christmas specials are absurdly vapid, this one is absurdly jovial. Lorna's "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," in a little rocket of a voice, is very nearly professional. But the guest Jack Jones, with hair tasty enough to snack on, looks apprehensive. Perhaps he fears the intent way that Garland appreciates her guests, touching them and almost blindsiding them with the rapture of her listening—a little like the way she idolized Sophie Tucker twenty-six years before in "Broadway Melody of 1938." The only satisfying element in the entire hour is Garland's song spots.

Eventually, the series emphasized nothing but Garland and her audience—an ideal presentation. Throughout, she was totally in command of her talent, even if footage of rehearsals suggests that she more or less had to be pushed onto the stage in a daze. As always with Garland, the arrangements and the repertory were excellent. (There was one rare miscalculation: her insistence on singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" as a reaction to John Kennedy's assassination.) We hear the song style of a mature Garland, just as infectious as in her Babe years but more intense in ballads. On her Carnegie Hall album, the normally lazy "Come Rain or Come Shine" leaps into hearing on raging bongos, and Garland starts the vocal over them alone, a bracing novelty, ultra-modern in its day. The performance is inflamed, with a quasi-improvisational second chorus that soars on to a white-hot climax as the audience erupts. Yet "Stormy Weather," long and slow, achieves the same effect by pulling *inward.*

Powerful or poignant, Garland doesn't act her songs, in the manner of Edith Piaf. She narrates them, describing rather than projecting the feelings that the composer and lyricist have disclosed. Every Piaf album is a torch recital, but Garland's 1957 torch LP, "Alone," on Capitol, is graceful rather than torchy—surprising for a singer who is generally thought of as a tragic figure. Garland's "Mean to Me" is almost playful, her "By Myself" not deflated but exultant; and, in "Me and My Shadow," on the line "We never knock 'cause nobody's there" she laughs. For the CD release, Capitol has plopped in a bonus track, "Then You've Never Been Blue." It could almost be a comment on the entire performance.

It was this avoidance of overt character portrayal which allowed Garland such range of repertory: ancient and new-minted; cabaret jazz and Broadway classics and wistful ditties. Most

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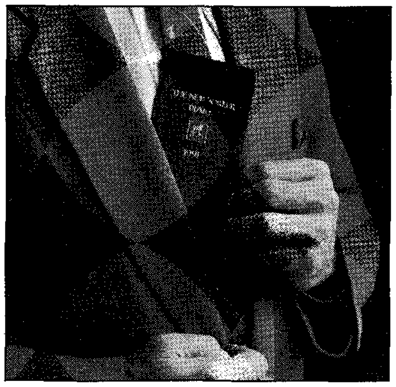

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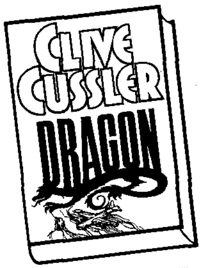

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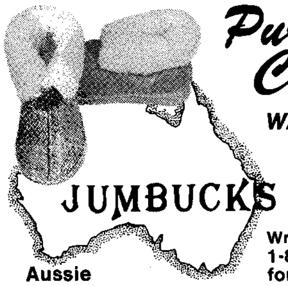

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singers bend a song to their peculiar intonation; Garland made contact with each number primarily through its musical structure, which enabled her to remain faithful to what was written without losing her individuality. She made each song hers without taking anything away from the song.

For this reason, it is absurd to compare her, as many do, to Al Jolson: Jolson is parochial, while Garland is universal. She is comparable to no one, not only the first of her kind but the last. She is irritatingly indescribable. Even Mickey Rooney, improvising (I think) a curtain speech on that early show in Garland's series, can't do better than "There aren't adjectives enough to express in the world how one and only Judy is Judy."

Being indescribable is good for one's legend, and Garland is lavish with that, given the downfalls and comebacks, a vaguely mysterious death, a mythopoetic theme song and elemental image (the rainbow), and, significantly, a constant posthumous presence through her films and recordings. In certain ways, Garland is more alive today than she was in her last years. "I'm what's left of Judy Garland," she told her biographer Gerold Frank.

It was meant as a joke. But it is true, and startling, that Garland, who made her career playing characters who could seize their destiny victoriously, did at some point lose control of her life. It happened somewhere in the nineteen-forties, when Metro renewed her contract more or less against her will, or in the nineteen-fifties, when she handed over to others the power to schedule her concerts, or in the nineteen-sixties, when her drug addiction overwhelmed her. She could be brutal with associates, a mean-spirited Texas Tornado, not herself. Stories circulated, egged on by the usual reckless press. Something about a terrible Judy Garland was supposed to fascinate us, and surely that is a testament to how nice she must have been. "The only harm I ever did was sing 'Over the Rainbow,' " Garland told Barbara Walters. She wants us to think of that kid in "Listen, Darling" who kidnaps her mother, Mary Astor, to sabotage a remarriage to some old duffer, or of the young woman who outwits the pirate when even Gene Kelly is out of ruses, or of the reigning star who is born because she has not only the gift but the force. She wants us to think, even, of another thing she told Barbara Walters: "This may distress a lot of people, but I really had a very nice life."

In fact, Garland's life demolishes the essential show-biz myth of her era—that to go out there a youngster and come back a star is heaven on earth, redemption. And she demolished this myth at a time when traditional show biz was breaking down. Rock swept Garland's music away just as she had swept away the Jolsons; and the movie musical, *her* form, barely survived her death, in 1969.

The legend is sorrow, but the music remains vital. All her life, she loved to sing, to focus on the theme that's new. She didn't revive old songs; she rejuvenated them. Judy Garland is a personality, an actress, and a legend but primarily a singer, a giver of concerts. That is why she wanted not to be buried but to be cremated, and her ashes to be left in inconspicuous, even unidentified, spots in the three places where she felt most loved—the New York Palace, the London Palladium, and the Paris Olympia.

This is what she left behind: not Dorothy or some difficult Judy or some enthusiast's invention of a Baby Gumm but her extraordinary ability to communicate through a song. It seems simple, but who else was as good at it? Who else knew as well, as instinctively, what singing is for? "You have to know what you're singing about before you can get the idea over to other people," she tells Mickey Rooney in "Babes in Arms."

Garland's legend weakens a bit at the end. Maybe she should have made one more backstage musical. The critic Ken Mandelbaum thinks that the great Garland role that never happened was Mama Rose in "Gypsy"—that it would have been even more climactic than "A Star Is Born." Maybe the climax itself is the problem. Don't we need the younger Judy, of the ebullient anthems, more than we need the later Garland, of the crashups? What we treasure is not so much the journey that the talent took as the talent itself, not the loss of innocence but the innocence. Our enduring image of Judy Garland is of the teen prancing through those ridiculous old musicals, telling folks that she can sing and asking them, not plaintively and not compulsively but with an almost reckless confidence—because she *knows* she's hot—"Wanta hear me?"

—ETHAN MORDDEN

# BOOKS

## BRIEFLY NOTED

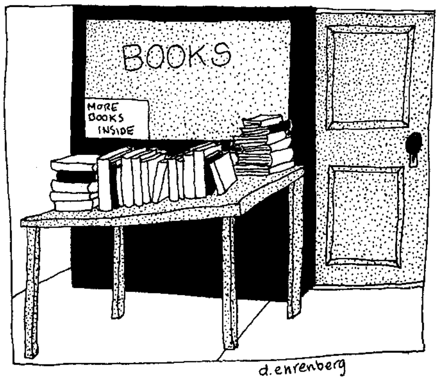
### FICTION

Rabbit at Rest, by John Updike (Knopf; $21.95). This fourth, and final, installment of the Rabbit chronicle finds him, now fifty-five, living in semi-retirement and in the grip of premature old age. He's tired and depressed, he's got problems with his digestion, and he needs a bypass operation. At home, Nelson, Rabbit's shifty son, is snorting coke and breaking his mother's heart, and Springer Motors, the Toyota franchise that was once the cornerstone of Rabbit's prosperity, has fallen on hard times. This book is much gloomier than its predecessor, the exuberant "Rabbit Is Rich," and there is about it, perhaps inevitably, an air of weariness, of winding down, as four decades' worth of themes and plot lines are carefully wrapped up and old characters are wheeled on for one last appearance. But Updike's descriptive powers have never been fresher, and the book creates with stunning exactness a diorama of the cultural and physical landscape of the late eighties. The settings include not only Rabbit's now familiar haunts of Brewer and Mt. Judge—Updike's fictional version of Reading, Pennsylvania, and its suburbs—but Valhalla Village, Rabbit's new vacation home, in a part of Florida that consists almost entirely of tacky condos and golf courses and drive-in medical centers. Not since the Nabokov of "Lolita" has anyone written about roadside America with such studiousness and such evident delight.

Too Loud a Solitude, by Bohumil Hrabal, translated from the Czech by Michael Henry Heim (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $16.95). For thirty-five years Haňt'a has been compacting trash in a cellar in Prague, the beneficiary of what he calls an "unwitting education": he has rescued thousands of valuable books from the jaws of the hydraulic press. His thoughts are full of Kant and Hegel as he assembles bales of waste, always on the lookout for more literature, surrounded by rowdy mice and swilling pitchers of beer. He is interrupted now and then by his crotchety, abusive boss, by two sexy gypsy girls who come bearing loads of trash on their backs, and by a nervous philosophy professor who relies on him for reading material. Haňt'a's dreary but book-rich routine goes awry when he is suddenly replaced by two strapping young men from the Brigade of Socialist Labor, who guzzle milk as they toss both wastepaper and rare books into the press with disinterested, cheerful efficiency. This tale of Haňt'a's "farewell to small joys," which dates from the seventies, remains lighthearted even as it contends with serious matters like the ills of Communism and the rewards of intellectual freedom, and it offers a nimble answer to the chicken-and-egg question of which comes first, the text or the reader.

### GENERAL

Africa: Dispatches from a Fragile Continent, by Blaine Harden (Norton; $22.50). This substantial and startling report deals with the forty-five countries that lie south of the Sahara and north of the Republic of South Africa—countries that have enjoyed independence, some for more than thirty years, but are now falling apart. Mr. Harden, who spent four years travelling through Africa as a Washington *Post* correspondent, begins his book with an intensive and unforgettable description of a monstrous riverboat voyage on the Zaire River and goes on to tell us about the deteriorating condition—economic, political, cultural—of such important nations as Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Liberia, Nigeria. He finds Africa suffering from the "Big Man disease"—dictatorship, usually military—in which progress is crippled by corruption, and he holds our government up to scorn for blinding itself to the often savage nature of these "Big Men" while loading them with honors and financial goodies. In Nigeria, the most slum-and-crime ridden yet dynamic and creative of African nations, he sees some hope for a democratic future, but it is a forlorn one. Photographs.



City Play, by Amanda Dargan and Steven Zeitlin (Rutgers; $24.95). An erudite and affectionate look at the frequently ingenious adaptations that city dwellers, and particularly New York City children, have made to an environment in which outdoor play space has steadily declined. ("City Play" was originally an exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York.) The authors evoke and comment rather than catalogue (the uninitiated will be driven to the dictionary for descriptions of games like tip cat and ring-a-leavio), but their text, which is threaded through black-and-white photographs and vivid firsthand accounts from the nineteenth century to the present, raises engaging questions about such conflicts as those between tradition and inventiveness, safety and freedom. While they caution against romanticizing urban street life, the authors also make it clear that any true sense of community is nourished by children at play—and diminished where play is restricted. Some of the photographs are breathtaking, and most make a point of their own about the emotional polarities of play: they capture excitement and joy at one extreme and, at the other, convey the gravity of complete absorption.

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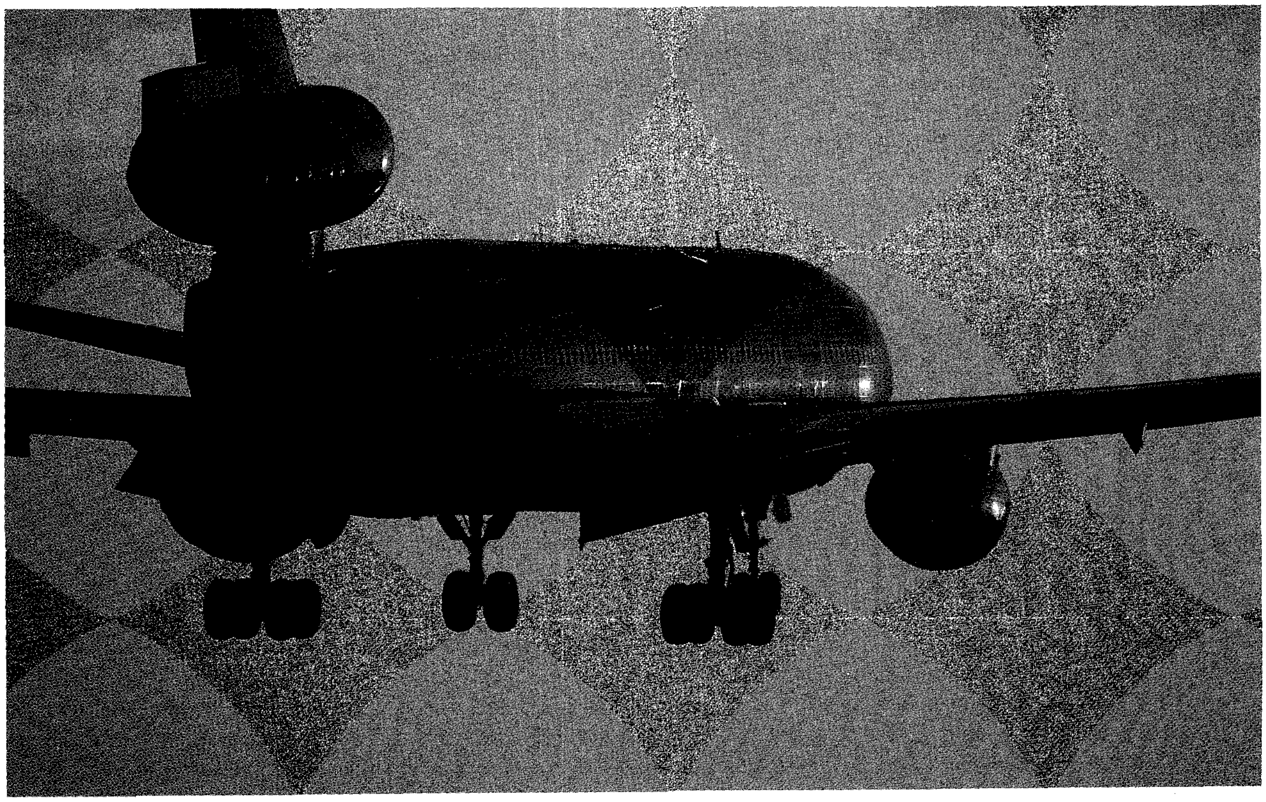

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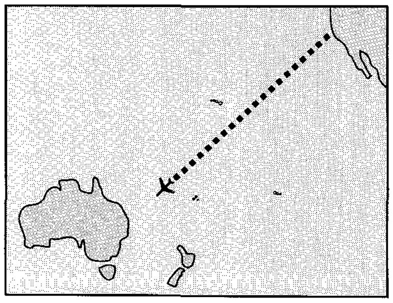

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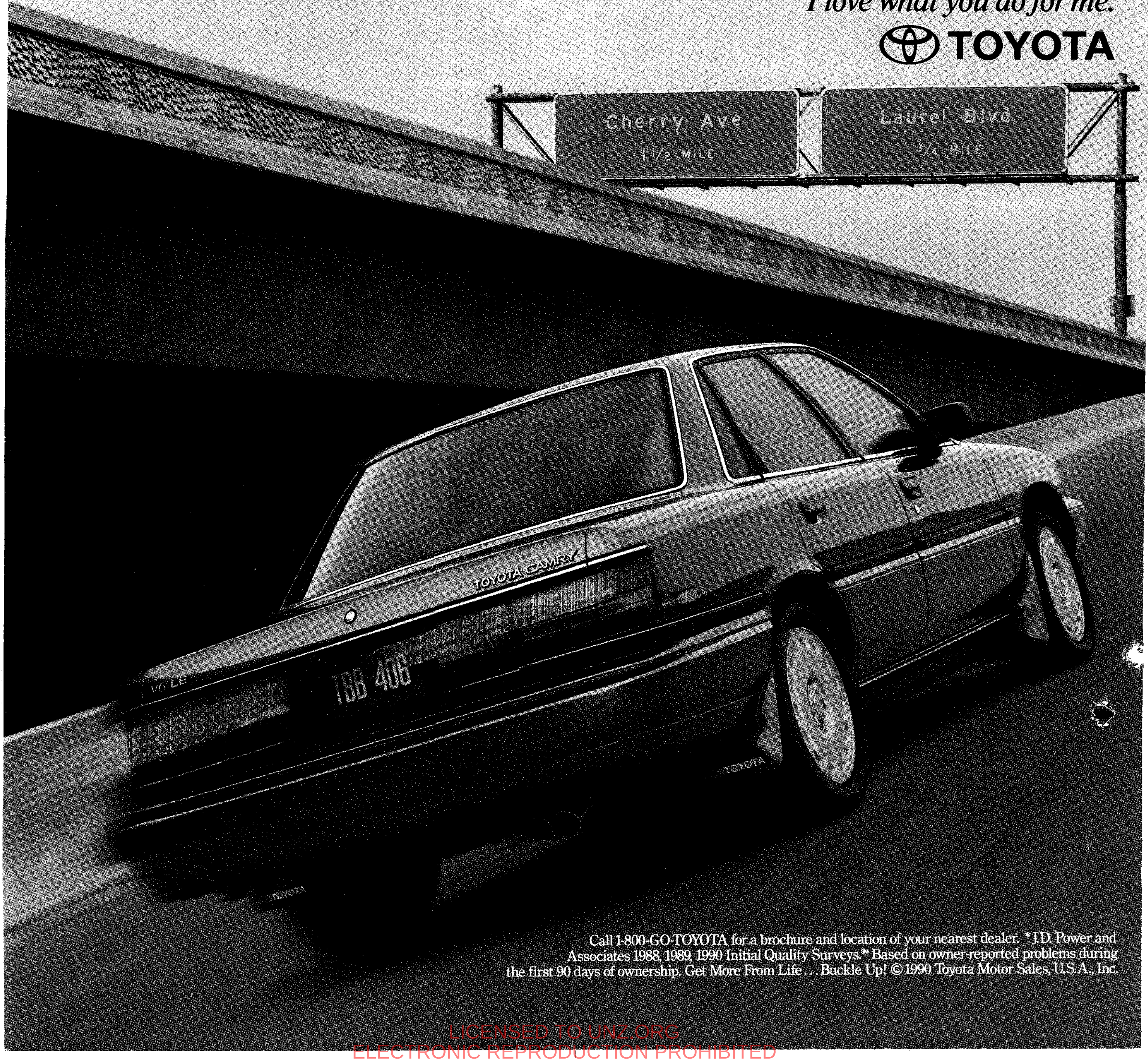

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